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# **SPEAKING AND WRITING ENGLISH**

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**A Course of Study for the Eight  
Grades of the Elementary School**

with

**A Preliminary Discussion**

of

**The Problem of Elementary English**

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**Second Edition**

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**By**

**Bernard M. Sheridan, Superintendent of the Public Schools,  
Lawrence, Mass.**



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### Acknowledgments.

In the preparation of this course of study ideas and suggestions have been borrowed from many sources, and sometimes without change of language. Separate acknowledgment being out of the question, the undersigned desires to express in this place his indebtedness to all who have been a help to him in this way, and the hope that they in turn may find in these pages some ideas of his own that are worthy of imitation.

Bernard M. Sheridan,  
Superintendent of Schools.

June, 1915.



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# PART ONE.

## INTRODUCTION.

### THE PROBLEM OF SPOKEN AND WRITTEN ENGLISH IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.

Language is by all odds the most important subject in the curriculum. It is, also, for many reasons the subject that is most difficult to teach. There has been an almost entire lack of standards for the teacher to go by. The language habits in the home and on the street are generally not good. There is so little "linguistic conscience" among grown up people that it is difficult to arouse any in little children. These difficulties have been enormously increased in recent years by the influx of large numbers of non-English-speaking peoples, with the result that in some schools of our city the teaching of English is no longer the teaching of the mother tongue, but the teaching of a foreign language.

The purpose of this course of study is to help the teacher to meet the elementary language problem more effectively and more hopefully. A few things it has aimed definitely to do:

(1) To replace vague, uncertain, and sometimes too ambitious aims with a purpose clearly defined and reasonably possible of achievement.

(2) To prescribe limits within which the elementary work in language is to be confined.

(3) To emphasize the teaching of oral language, both for its own sake and for its value as a foundation and preparation for written language, and to formulate a

systematic and progressive plan of teaching this most important and much neglected side of English composition.

(4) To construct tentative standards of achievement for each of the eight elementary grades, in both oral and written language, which it seems reasonable to expect the majority of pupils to reach.

The lack of a clear and definite limitation of the work to be covered in language teaching in the elementary school has been responsible for much of the waste which has attended the teaching of the subject. Courses of study have called for more than could possibly be accomplished. The requirements have been too many and too vague. Many things have been taught that should have been postponed to the high school, since they do not appeal to the needs or the capacity of the stage of development of the ordinary elementary school pupil. Pupils who leave the elementary school before completing the course will be better off for having been taught *a smaller number of things thoroughly* and for having had *abundant practice in these few fundamental things*.

The kind and amount of language training in the elementary school should be largely determined, it seems fair to say, by the answers to the following questions:

1. What are the common language needs of people in every day life?
2. What specific language habits can the school cultivate which will most usefully meet the demands that will be made upon the boy and girl at the end of their elementary school course?
3. What capacity for oral and written expression is possessed, or may with reasonable effort be acquired, by ordinary children in the different grades?

In the light of such a study of children's language needs and capacities, the following would seem to be a reasonable and workable aim for the elementary school:

1. *To turn out pupils able to stand before the class and talk for a few minutes upon a subject within the range of their knowledge or experience, speaking plainly, in clean-cut sentences, and without common grammatical mistakes.*

2. *To turn out pupils able to write with fair facility an original paragraph upon a subject within the range of their experience or their interests.*

Such a paragraph should show:

1. *An absolute mastery of "the sentence idea".*
2. *Freedom from glaring grammatical mistakes.*
3. *Correct spelling of all ordinary words.*
4. *Unfailing use of the commonest marks of punctuation.*
5. *Some evidence of attention to matters of sentence structure and to the choice of words.*
6. *Some degree of power to organize and arrange ideas around a central thought.*

## SPOKEN ENGLISH.

It is much more important that the elementary school should give pupils *ability to talk well* than it is that it should give them *ability to write well*. This is simply because people talk more than they write. Few people write much, but all people talk a good deal. People who write for a business may write a book or two in a year. Most people talk enough in a single week to fill a book. Few graduates of the grammar school are ever called upon in after days to submit to a test of their knowledge of arithmetic or history or geography. But their spoken English is being passed upon every day of their lives, and it is largely upon the basis of this test that they are adjudged to be educated or uneducated men and women. Moreover, their success in business and in their intercourse with other people depends more than is commonly realized upon their power to speak well. Yet of all the subjects in the curriculum oral

language seems to be least effectively taught. Indistinct utterance, poor sentence structure, grammatical mistakes, a poverty of words, and a lack of anything like fluency are too common in the speech of grammar school graduates.

There are several reasons why our pupils do not learn to talk well:

(1) There is not enough of oral language work, as a separate and distinct training, in the elementary school.

(2) Oral work is not utilized as much as it ought to be as an aid in, and a preparation for, written work. The child who is to be taught to write well must first be taught to talk well.

(3) The other subjects of the course are not utilized as effectively as they might be to develop power in oral composition. All these provide occasion for a free and natural use of language on the part of the pupils, and fruitful observation of their speech on the part of the teacher.

(4) The common method of the recitation furnishes little motive for the pupil to talk well. Very rarely has he the sense that he is addressing an audience with the purpose of actually telling or saying something worth while. Most of the things he recites, and some of the things he reads aloud, have very little interest for him. When he recites, he recites to the teacher, and much of what he says is lost to the pupils who sit behind him. When he reads, he reads to the teacher with the audience behind his back; or, if he stands in front of the room, he reads to an audience whose every eye is following the words he is reading. Since he is conscious of no real need to speak clearly and distinctly, that his fellow-pupils may hear, he does not do so.

(5) The school has perpetually to fight the bad influence of the language environment in which many pupils spend their out-of-school hours.

(6) The school makes the mistake of thinking it can correct bad habits of speech by the application of the rules of grammar. The ability to talk correctly comes from practice and not from the study of rules. The pupil hears these incorrect forms over and over again on the street. Obedient to



the principle of motor reaction, such forms invariably "write themselves out" in his daily speech. It is of little avail that the pupil *knows* what is right. He must hear it; say it; say it again and again and again; say it until the motor reaction is so strong that the right form stamps its impression on the spinal cord and wipes out the wrong one. Only practice can make perfect.

These matters receive attention, over and over again, in the pages that follow. It is not thought necessary at this time to do more than state them.

An effective course in oral composition should include the following essential things:

- (1) Much opportunity for free self expression.
- (2) Constant attention to matters of voice, enunciation, pronunciation, and inflection.
- (3) The training of children, by constant practice, to compose oral paragraphs upon simple themes, and the development, through these, of some elementary skill in selecting, arranging and expressing their ideas.
- (4) Unremitting efforts in all grades to eliminate the common errors of speech.

(1) The child's free self-expression is developed best by drawing upon his own personal *experience*. That is what the youngest pupil knows best and can talk about best. *Imagination* follows experience directly. It is a personal field, easily and pleasurably worked. *Reproduction* has to do largely with what lies outside of the personal experiences of children, to things that they do not really know. Memory is the principal factor in reproduction. Experience and imagination have little to do with it. It is, therefore, the least profitable field for children's free expression, and should be sparingly used.

(2) The "schoolroom voice" has long been a term of reproach. Teachers may not be able to improve the quality of

their pupils' voices, but they can do a great deal toward getting pupils to speak in an easy and natural tone of voice, which will still be audible not only to the teacher, but also to the pupils in all parts of the room. In addition, constant attention should be given, day in and day out, to matters of clear articulation, correct pronunciation, and right inflection. By making the conditions of the recitation such that the pupils get the feeling that they are *actually talking to one another* with the intention of imparting information, or opinions, and not merely "reciting" to the teacher to prove they have learned their lessons, the speech of children would greatly improve in these respects. But no matter how favorable to good talking the schoolroom conditions are made, pupils ought to have throughout the entire course systematic training through special exercises.

In an appendix will be found lists of some of the most common defects in the enunciation of children and some exercises designed to remove them. The exercises printed there are meant only to be suggestive. Teachers will doubtless be able to supplement them by many others of their own. There is, however, enough material in the printed drills, if they are diligently used, to turn in the right direction the careless tendency so manifest in the speech habits of children.

(3) Oral composition, as the term is used in this course of study, means a great deal more than ordinary talking or conversation, which as often as not is fragmentary and disconnected. By oral composition is meant a body of connected speech, *large enough in scope to demand attention to its structure and form*. All the qualities that are to be developed in the written composition, may be, and ought to be, developed first in the oral exercise: choice and variety of words, quality and variety of sentences, and arrangement of sentences in a paragraph. This development will, of course, be slow and gradual. But there will be no improvement at all, unless children are habituated from the first to be critical of their spoken English, in so far, at least, as the more flagrant mistakes in syntax are concerned, and the more fundamental matters of sentence structure and use of connectives.

This course of study provides for much practice in composing oral paragraphs and gives many suggestions for teaching children how to acquire the art of developing interesting oral themes on subjects within the range of their interests and experience. Numerous examples of oral compositions, drawn from the actual work of pupils, are given under every grade.

(4) (The habit of correct speech cannot be gained from a study of grammar.) Good habits or bad habits of speech are pretty well fixed before the child studies grammar and before he could possibly derive any benefit from a study of it. Good English is mastered by practice, not by rule. It is of little use for the children to know principles or rules. They may spend a week learning the rules for the agreement of the verb with its subject, but rules will not prevent them from saying "he don't". But if they are made to repeat "he doesn't", "he doesn't", "he doesn't", alone or in concert, in as many sentences as can be made by talking as fast as they can for five or ten minutes, the correct form will finally begin to sound right. It is not *knowledge*, but *habit* that counts.

In this course of study an attempt has been made to allot to each grade a number of common errors for correction. Naturally such a distribution is more or less arbitrary. That certain errors of speech are listed under one grade and not under another does not imply a failure to realize that all of the errors are committed by pupils in all the grades, or that the correction of them in one grade will make it unnecessary to fight against the same errors in succeeding grades. The chief object of allotting the correction of certain errors to certain grades and that of certain other errors to other grades is to focus the attention of both teachers and pupils upon a relatively few points, for which they will be held accountable.

The "language game" has been found to be one of the most effective methods for teaching right forms of speech, particularly in the primary grades. By means of these the child is brought frequently to use the correct forms in a natural manner and under conditions which appeal strongly to him. In an appendix a number of these games will be found,

prefaced by an interesting analysis of the common errors of children's speech, based upon a systematic study conducted by the teachers of a city school system during the whole of a school year.

## WRITTEN ENGLISH.

### IN GENERAL.

When the pupil comes to put on paper what he has to say, the situation becomes complicated by the entrance of factors which were not present when he was expressing himself orally. He must think about his penmanship. He must watch his spelling. He must look out for his capitals, his punctuation, his indentations, and all that. These things become automatic, or nearly so, after years of training and practice; so that educated men and women are required to give little or no thought to their penmanship, spelling, punctuation, and the other technicalities of written expression. But the child is at first obliged to think of all these things all of the time. By degrees, however, with reasonably good instruction and sufficient practice of the right kind, the observance of the simpler requirements of written technique becomes habitual to him, so that by the time the pupil has completed the elementary school course, he ought to be fairly free from the necessity of giving conscious attention to the mechanics of written language.

Added to the mechanical difficulties of written expression, there is present, also, at the moment of writing, a self-consciousness which tends to check the spontaneity which characterizes his oral efforts. In the case of children this is no doubt partly due to the demands made upon them by the technique of written expression (penmanship, spelling, capitals, punctuation, and so on) all of which, because they have not yet become matters of established habit, are a constant drain upon their attention, and act like brakes upon the relatively free and easy delivery of their ideas which characterizes their spoken language. Thought has a stronger and closer association

with speech than with writing, and even adults, whose penmanship and spelling and punctuation have become matters of second nature, requiring no conscious attention during the process of composition, find their expression slowing down the moment they put pen to paper. Written expression is of its very nature slower, more deliberate, more careful, and, therefore, more productive of self-consciousness than oral expression. But with children it is probably true that the chief difficulty which written language at first presents over oral language is the attention which has to be given to the technicalities of writing, the penmanship, the spelling, the punctuation, the use of capitals, and matters pertaining to the arrangement of the composition on the paper.

Strictly speaking, penmanship and spelling are not matters of language technique at all, since they are not developed primarily through written language. The school program provides separate drill for both. The failure to use capitals correctly and the simpler marks of punctuation (the period and the comma) is accounted for not so much by the supposition that these things are difficult in themselves as it is explained by the lack of careful training in oral language. The child who is trained from the first to speak in clear cut sentences will after a while acquire such a strong sentence sense that he will seldom, if ever, write as a sentence a group of words that is not a sentence. Pupils write in the classroom as they have been accustomed to talk in the classroom. Failure to use capitals and periods in written composition is largely due to bad oral habits. If children do not possess the sentence sense, their written work is sure to contain many omissions of capitals and periods, and consequently many misuses of the comma. The teaching of written language, so far as *correctness* goes, offers but few difficulties over and above those which are met with in the teaching of oral language.

There is, of course, more than mechanical correctness to be sought in written composition. There must, in addition, be some attention paid in the upper grades to sentence structure and to some of the other rudiments of style. For this purpose, the careful and deliberate written exercise, giving opportunity

for thought, for studied revision, and finished workmanship, is a more effective vehicle of instruction than the oral exercise, which must of necessity be less thoughtful and structurally less excellent. *Still, the teacher should never forget that the basis of all good written work is laid in good oral work, and that if oral work is neglected, her efforts to produce good written language will be in vain.*

Written composition, then, so far as the mechanics of writing are concerned, does not offer so many difficulties as the teacher has been inclined to attribute to it. But the few things that are required in the way of written technicalities must be mastered as early as possible in the course, so that these difficulties will not stand too long in the way of the freedom and spontaneity of the child's expression. So long as his attention is distracted from the thought of what he wants to say by thinking of his penmanship, his spelling, his punctuation, and similar matters of written technique, his composition is likely to be formal and meagre and uninteresting. On the other hand, it would be folly to attempt to cultivate freedom of expression by allowing children to write regardless of the rules of punctuation, spelling, arrangement, and the like. These matters of written technique (and we are dealing with only the simplest items of them in this course of study) should not, during the process of writing, hold the center of consciousness. They should occupy only the "margin" of consciousness, as we say. But before they can be safely relegated to the margin, they must first have occupied the centre of consciousness for some time. Children do not possess intuitively habits of correct written expression. These must be built up from the day that written language is begun in the second grade. The important thing, and the difficult thing, is to give sufficient drill on the mechanics of written composition, without killing the child's spontaneity and his freedom of expression. Drill on the mechanics of written composition there must be, from the very start. At the same time, the teacher must be extremely cautious not to let her insistence upon correct form kill the child's desire for self-expression. Form must be taught, and in the process content must not be sacrificed. This is a task



that calls for all the wisdom and all the ingenuity of the teacher. It is the real test of the good teacher of composition.

### ONE PARAGRAPH COMPOSITIONS.

At the outset of this discussion the statement was made that the lack of a clear and definite limitation of the language work in the grades below the high school has been responsible for a great deal of the ineffectiveness of our teaching, and the following general standard was there set up as a reasonable measure of attainment in written composition for the ordinary graduate of a Lawrence grammar school:

“The ability to write with fair facility an original paragraph upon a subject within the range of his experience or his interests, using sentences grammatically complete and correctly punctuated, with correct spelling, and free from grievous grammatical mistakes.”

This standard has the merit of being tolerably definite and reasonably possible of attainment. Later on in the course of study, under assignment of work by grades, there will be found paragraphs written by children, which have been adopted as tentative standards for the different grades.

The chief reason for limiting the written exercise to a single paragraph is to assure sufficient practice in writing which a longer composition makes impossible, and to focus the attention of both pupil and teacher upon the smallest possible language field. In addition to the opportunity it affords for practice, the single paragraph is admirably suited to the purposes of teaching elementary composition. It is a complete unit, a whole composition in miniature. It gives free range to development of sentence structure. It may illustrate all the forms of discourse: narration, description, exposition, argument, as the four chief kinds of writing are technically known. It is subject to all the laws of discourse. By its use the child gains a practical knowledge of every important feature of literary workmanship. The child need not be conscious of

these things. But the teacher should think of them all the time.

The children in the lower grades will not, of course, be expected to produce a paragraph. In the first grade, children will make a sentence or two with alphabet cards, first from sentences written on the board by the teacher, and later will construct one or two original sentences, based mostly on their reading lessons. By the time the pupil has reached the third grade he will be taught to cast his sentences into a form of a paragraph. This paragraph will at first be short and simple. It will grow in length and in organization of thought during each succeeding year of the elementary school course.

### THE MASTERY OF "THE SENTENCE IDEA."

The fundamental thing, the element upon which all other details of composition depend and upon which the whole superstructure of composition is built, is the mastery of the sentence. Nothing, therefore, is more important in the earlier grades than the development of what is variously called "the sentence idea", "the sentence sense", "the sentence feeling", "the sentence instinct"—the trained habit of mind by which the completed thought is recognized as complete, and left to stand by itself. The lack of this fundamental "sentence sense" is the most glaring fault of elementary school compositions. It is a natural enough fault in very young pupils, but its persistence in the higher grades, as is too often the case, seems almost indefensible.

This fault appears in two forms. The first is present in the composition that rambles on and on, with statement after statement strung along on a series of "*and's*", "*but's*", and "*so's*", often without so much as a comma to separate the different statements. Very young children talk in this fashion, prattling on in a breathless stream of words, seldom dropping their voices until they have reached the end of what they have to say. Children in school talk in much the same way. Here



are some stenographic reports of actual talk of third grade pupils recently heard in our own schools:

"My mother told me to go to the store and get her a loaf of bread and then I went to the store and the bread fell down and got all muddy."

"The ship was very, very long and it carried coal and sometimes it carried pig iron and one day my papa got off the boat to buy me a fish line and one day I had that fish line and I was trying to fish on the river but the fish pulled so that I couldn't fish any more and my mother said to stop because it was too hard."

The source of this fault suggests its remedy. Children must be taught through much careful *oral* work to break themselves of this bad habit. Most of our troubles in written composition come from our neglect of oral composition. The child who has been taught to speak in clean-cut sentences will give the teacher little annoyance by writing the kind of sentence that is here described. This has been said before, and is repeated here only to remind the teacher that if this fault persists in the written compositions of her pupils, it is because she has failed to head off the trouble by sufficient oral practice on this particular point. While the habit is being broken up, the children's sentences will become short and jerky. But this will do no harm. The later grades will attend to that. In any case, the "choppy" sentence is preferable to the "run on" sentence.

The other form in which this lack of "sentence feeling" shows itself is worse in some respects than the first, because it is a more violent breach of the laws of the sentence. Here is an illustration of it:

"My dog is a spaniel his name is Nep, that stands for Neptune. Neptune was the sea god, we call the dog Nep because he is so fond of the water, he likes to be in it all the time, once he got caught in the weeds and was nearly drowned."

The fault here consists not in stringing together a number of statements by "ands", but in running complete statements

together without periods and capitals. Sometimes no mark separates the sentences. If any mark is employed, it is only the comma. Hence it is that text-book writers, in referring to this fault, call it "the comma sentence." So common is the blunder in the writing of young children that it has come to be known as The Child's Error. To make the offence more heinous in the sight of his pupils one teacher is known to have named it "The Baby's Mistake". In high school text-books (because of our neglect the fault often persists beyond the elementary school) it is variously referred to as "the badge of ignorance", "the badge of shiftlessness", "the hopeless error". These epithets indicate how important it is that this fault should be gotten rid of early, if it is to be gotten rid of at all. Calling names, however, seldom does any good. What we need to remember is that the habit of running sentences together, either by the "and" method or the "no stop" method is an exceedingly unfortunate one, and very hard to overcome, if it once gets a good start.

If a close study is made of children's compositions with reference to The Child's Error, it will be found to occur most often when there is a close relation between one sentence and the next. This close relation is present whenever the succeeding sentence begins with a pronoun, the antecedent of which is the subject of the preceding sentence. Thus, in the illustration above, "My dog is a spaniel, his name is Nep," the child is conscious of a very close relation between the two statements. He has a dog, and the dog's name is Nep. For this reason, children are particularly in danger of committing the Child's Error when a sentence begins with *he, she, it, they, this, these, etc.*, because sentences beginning with these words, while being grammatically independent, are somewhat dependent for their meaning upon the preceding sentence. In the same way, a clause or a phrase coming at the end of a sentence is likely to be thought of as an independent statement. It is easy for the child to forget it is a part of the sentence. Thus: "Washington once saved a child. Jumping into a swift stream to save it." Or: "And so the boy got the sled after all. Which was just what he wanted." Trained writers do not place clauses

and phrases in such places. But beginners are crude in the art of sentence structure, and for this reason are prone to use the rear-end phrase or clause, set off as an independent statement marked by both capital and period.

It has been thought worth while to present the problem of the sentence in considerable detail, and to call attention to some of the reasons which render pupils peculiarly liable to the errors we have been describing. *The mastery of the sentence is absolutely basal in elementary written work.* It is folly to talk about teaching "style" and the other refinements of writing until children are *sentence-sure*. There are a good many things we would do, if we could. A few we must do. "There is no use in trying" to build a superstructure, when the foundation is lacking. And the foundation of all writing—of all expression of thought—is the sentence.

### CORRECT SPELLING OF COMMON WORDS.

There are two things in the general run of school compositions that, above all others, make countless teachers mourn. The first is the bad sentence—the "stringy" sentence, the "comma sentence", or worse, the sentence that is not a sentence at all. This was dealt with in the preceding chapter. The other is the misspelling of common words. If these two conspicuous defects were absent from the compositions, how much brighter the world would seem to the teacher who sits down resignedly to correct a set of papers. Even a paper absolutely wooden in respect to interest and style, if it were free from these two glaring faults, would seem positively hopeful.

We have been teaching spelling faithfully enough, but we have not been teaching it intelligently enough. We have been wasting precious time teaching children how to spell thousands of words they seldom or never write, while we have not taught them to spell the really small number of words that they write all the time. The trouble has been that our material of spelling has been chosen without reference to the fact that children

possess three vocabularies (a reading, a speaking, and a writing vocabulary) and that spelling relates only to the last of these, the writing vocabulary. All this is admirably summed up in the conclusions of the investigation of the material of spelling made last year by the Division of Education in the University of South Dakota. Here are three of them:

1. Since students in the highest grade of our common schools have on the average less than 2,500 words in their writing, or spelling, vocabularies, our first conclusion is, *our spelling material is bad in that it gives thousands of words which children do not use, and at the same time we are not teaching them to spell the much smaller lists of words which they do use.*

2. The words which give most trouble in spelling are found, almost without exception, in the writing vocabularies of the lower grades; and since these troublesome but useful words are not pointed out and effectively dealt with in these early grades, *our handling of the most dangerous spelling material is not efficient, and students go on misspelling, year after year, words that should be mastered in the early school years.*

3. Since grade students commonly use from 500 to 2,500 words in writing, yet on the average misspell but about fifty words, **not one child out of a thousand misspelling as many as one hundred words,** *our spelling problem is not so gigantic as it is commonly believed to be, for the reason that a handful of words misspelled over and over by each student has misled us in our judgment.*

A list of about two hundred common words frequently misspelled is printed in this course of study (under assignment of work by grades), upon which teachers are asked to place special emphasis in their teaching of spelling. The list contains practically all of the "one hundred spelling demons" of the South Dakota report. Some of the words are repeated every year. Most of the words are introduced early in the course. A vigorous campaign against this handful of troublesome words for the space of a single year would go a long way toward banishing from school compositions the great bulk of the spelling errors which at present disfigure them.

SUBJECTS SHOULD BE CONCRETE, PERSONAL,  
DEFINITE, AND BRIEF.

A good subject is half the battle. Children cannot be expected to write upon a subject about which they know little and care less. You cannot get blood out of a turnip.

Subjects should be chosen within the range of the pupil's knowledge and interests. Children like best what they know most about, and they love to write when they know what they are writing about. There is all the difference in the world between "having to say something and having something to say."

Knowledge and interest, therefore, are necessary conditions for good work in composition. Children's lives are crowded with incidents; they have plenty of ideas and opinions which they are eager to express. Every child who is not feeble-minded has something worth saying if he is given a decent chance to say it. From their life at home, in the streets, in school; from their sports, amusements, duties, tasks; from the things they have seen and heard and felt and done; from the things they read and the things they imagine: from all these may be drawn an almost endless variety of subjects, full of the breath of life and the actuality of experience.

Some children, of course, are less keen in their observation than others, and all children need to have their eyes opened and their wits sharpened to see interesting themes in the incidents and experiences which make up their daily life. To teach children to observe closely and to think clearly and consecutively is one of the chief values of training in composition. In handling subjects drawn from every day life there will be need at first for the teacher to exercise skill in keeping the children's compositions from becoming trite and trivial. This she can do by training children to discover interest in common things, and by suggesting a live manner of treatment. Nothing in the world is commonplace unless we make it so.

Subjects, then, should be *personal* and *concrete*. They need not always be of actual experience. Children have strong imaginations and can project themselves into a "figured"

environment. They like nothing better than to write from the standpoint of some imaginary person who for the moment they believe themselves to be. Even in writing about an actual experience there is always room for the play of imagination. Indeed, it is only in terms of the imagination that the actual can be interpreted.

Besides being *personal* and *concrete*, subjects should be *definite* and *brief*. "How I Spent My Vacation" is concrete and personal; but it lacks the second essential of a good subject: it is neither definite nor brief. It is impossible for any child to write in an interesting manner upon such a subject *within the limits of a single paragraph*. At best, it can be no more than a bare catalogue of events. Within the compass of any vacation, long or short, there is a score of incidents and experiences exactly suitable for narrating or describing in the written paragraph, because they give opportunity for striking and vivid detail; but to ask a child to set down in a single paragraph the doings of a whole vacation is to foredoom him to failure. The subject of "Birds" is another example of the too large topic. It has the quality of being concrete, and if the pupil to whom it is assigned knows something of birds at first hand, it has for him also the quality of being personal. But what child, no matter how well he knows the birds, can put anything of himself into a single paragraph on the general subject of "Birds"? "The Oriole's Nest", on the other hand, offers a specific theme for his knowledge, and he can treat it adequately in an ordinary paragraph. Better even than "The Oriole's Nest" would be a single phase of that interesting bit of bird life,—such as the location of the nest, or its architecture, or its special adaption to the use of this bird of the golden plumage and the golden voice. A child's paragraph on "A Trip on a Trolley Car" is not likely to produce much beyond a record of routes and running time. If, instead, the pupil should describe a Sunday school party on a trolley car, en route to a picnic in the morning, and a companion paragraph about the same party's return from the picnic grove at night, hot, tired, limp, and generally out of sorts, he would stand a vastly better chance of writing something worth while.



Teachers should, therefore, *narrow* their subjects. This focuses thinking, establishes a single point of view, and makes it possible for the child to put his own thinking into his composition. After that, even, it will be found necessary to train children to single out *some particular point* in his specific subject, so as to make some *one idea* stand out prominently. For an illustration of this take these two compositions on the subject, "Coming to School".

## COMING TO SCHOOL.

This morning I started from my home about eight o'clock to walk to school. When I got to my friend's house, she was already outside waiting for me, so we started right off. In front of us were a few girls we knew. They were all talking about a party they had been to the night before. My friend and I were asking each other questions about our history lesson, which was to come that morning. As we walked fast, we reached school about twenty minutes past eight.

## COMING TO SCHOOL.

It was fifteen minutes after eight o'clock when I started for school with an armful of books and a feeling that I had forgotten something in my hurry. A little farther along, I met my chum, who joined me in my haste, for neither of us wanted to spoil our records by tardiness, especially so near the beginning of the school year. We seemed to make very good time, and were within sight of the school building, when I suddenly remembered that I had been told to order something at a store which we had already passed on our way to school. So I left my friend, ran back a short distance, and entered the store, entirely out of breath. As nobody was in sight to wait on me, I coughed as loud as I could, and soon a young man came out from the rear of the store, slowly putting on his white coat. It seemed to me that I stood there half an hour while he fixed his coat and wrote down my order, but it was really only two minutes. At the end of that time I rushed from the store and ran the remaining short distance to the school as fast as I knew how. Luckily, I didn't have to climb any stairs, but reached my room and sank into my chair out of breath, just as the last bell rang. Right there and then I made up my mind that I would start for school earlier, for I do not like such narrow escapes.

The first composition is ineffective because it recounts a mere string of happenings, which make no particular impression. The second one is much more effective, because it brings out strongly the single thought of how close a call the writer had from being tardy. It illustrates, too, the three principles which children should gradually be taught to observe in their paragraph writing: (1) To bring out a single point that is interesting, entertaining, or instructive. (2) To select a point that can be brought out in the space allowed (a single paragraph). (3) To bring out the point in the most effective manner possible.

In the assignment of work by grades a number of topics have been printed, as suggestive of the *kind* of subjects that ought to be used. Nearly all of them were contributed by teachers. Some effort has been made to grade them, though this arrangement is not important. The subjects listed under one grade may well be used in any other, with or without adaptation. The treatment of them will, of course, be different according to the age of the pupils, their growing maturity of thought, and their experience and skill in writing. It is not intended that only these subjects shall be used, or that any of them shall be used, if teachers can invent better ones. After all, the teacher is the best judge of the subjects her children are interested in and about which, consequently, they can write with confidence and pleasure. The reason for printing them at all is to indicate the *kind* of subjects which should invariably be chosen—*concrete, personal, definite, and brief*.

## THE CORRECTION OF COMPOSITIONS.

“How shall I correct my written work?” For years this question has been asked oftener perhaps than any other question connected with the teaching of English. It is an important question, and the attempts to answer it have done much to remove from our practice some things that were wasteful, if not positively wrong. But there still remains considerable difference of opinion as to just what is the right thing to do. Some teachers believe that the teacher should



note and mark every mistake, and that papers should be re-written with every mistake removed. Others, in revolt against the "reign of red-ink", have gone to the extreme of thinking that little or no correction of papers is necessary, and that correct language habits will somehow come down from the skies, if the pupil is required to write often enough. These teachers are fond of quoting, "The way to learn how to write is to write." But that isn't the whole story. The way to learn to write is to write *under the right kind of instruction and correction*.

As a matter of fact the question of "How shall I correct my written work?" cannot be answered intelligently until another much more important one is answered, "*Why* do I correct my written work?"

Judging from a very common practice of the teacher to go over every paper and correct every mistake, one would suppose the chief purpose of the teacher's correction was to secure a correct composition. She marks all misspelled words, puts in a capital here and period there, inserts a comma occasionally, straightens up an awkward sentence or two, deftly combines a pair of jerky sentences into a single smooth one, and maybe writes a closing sentence to make the composition finish strong. Then the pupil "re-writes" it, in his best handwriting (making a few mistakes in the "revise" that he did not make the first time) and the composition is put away with others as a sample of the pupil's work.

The next day she does the same. So do the pupils. With smiling serenity they repeat in their compositions the mistakes of yesterday, and of last week, and of last year, which all the while the teacher has been laboriously marking on their papers. For hundreds of years teachers have been correcting compositions in some such way as this, and their pupils have gone on making just the same mistakes over and over again. Evidently we have been going up the wrong street.

It is not the *composition* that we want to make perfect. We want to make *the pupil's power to write one a little less imperfect*. The *product* upon which we expend our red ink is of slight importance compared with the *power* which it should be the teacher's aim to develop. None of us can turn out in a

first draft a perfect copy of what we wish to say. We are compelled to look over our work carefully, to correct it, to be perpetually on the lookout for errors in our English, in our punctuation, even in our spelling. That is precisely what the teacher's correction should train children to do—or to begin to do. *The purpose of the teacher's correction is to cultivate in her pupils the habit of self-criticism. The only correction of compositions that is of any earthly use is that which trains children to correct their own.* This cannot be attained by red-inking every mistake, for the purpose of future correction, nor by neglecting to red-ink at all. It can only be attained by following out consistently all through the grades a method based on several very important principles.

1. There must be *some degree of progression in the work of correction.* It is useless to attempt to correct everything in every composition. No child should be expected to turn out an absolutely perfect paper. To secure a habit of correct expression, the only economical procedure is to see to it that the children work from month to month to correct a few mistakes at a time. Pupils will thus be more likely to have in mind, at any given period, the errors they are to avoid, and will accordingly tend to grow self-critical.

2. It is well to remember that the object of correcting is not to *mark the pupil*, but to *help the pupil*. This being so, it follows that the teacher will more likely be of genuine service to the pupil if she will enter so sympathetically into the work as to appreciate the individual difficulties of the writer. Here lies the value of the conference period. By sitting down by the side of the pupil and reading over his composition with him, the teacher can come into a direct personal relationship. This conference is, with many children, held most effectively when they are writing.

3. Pupils should be *taught how to criticise*, and how to intelligently appreciate their own and one another's work. Thus criticism by the teacher, which is indispensable, may be supplemented by trained criticism on the part of the writer's classmates. In teaching children how to criticise, teachers

should suggest a definite plan to be followed by them. Points like the following are suggestive:

1. Read the composition through.
2. Is it interesting? Tell one thing that made it so.
3. Did he write as if he were interested in his subject?
4. Did the writer keep to his subject. Did he put anything in it that was unnecessary?
5. Were any of the expressions new to you?
6. Mention any apt word that you noticed.
7. Indicate a particularly good sentence, or sentences.
8. Indicate a sentence or sentences that could be improved.
9. Help the pupil to restate it.
10. Correct grammatical errors.
11. Correct mechanical errors.

4. Many mistakes can be prevented by forewarning. Prevent means "to go before".

5. The teacher should never forget that criticism deals with merits as well as with defects.

Teachers must remember that the matter of the pupil's correction of his own work depends on his interest. You cannot develop the power of self-criticism in the boy who doesn't care whether he is right or wrong. One teacher can compel a boy to write a composition, but the whole school department cannot make him correct it intelligently *unless he wants to*. It is the teacher's business to make him want to.

There will not be much chance of his wanting to correct his own written work or much profit in letting him assist in the correction of other pupils' compositions until the following things shall have been done:

1. There must be aroused in him the desire for self-expression.

2. He must be led to see that there are ways of saying things which are better than other ways; that there is something which we call "good English", which it is worth while learning how to use.

3. He must be led honestly to prefer the better way of saying things to the way that was good enough for him before.

4. His criticism of his own work must at first be directed until it is impartial and unsparing.

5. His criticism of others must be directed and controlled. Criticism, like charity, should begin at home, but it very often does not. Until a pupil has proved himself a careful critic of his own compositions, he should not be allowed to criticise the work of others. At all times children, as well as teachers, must remember that criticism is quite as much a matter of merit as it is of mistakes. Pupils must be taught to realize when a thing is good, to be made to think why it is good, and to learn what it means to commend as well as to condemn.

In the upper grades, the pupil's observance of the following rules will minimize the necessity of the teacher's correction:

1. To select a subject for the composition paragraph out of his observation, experience, or reading, which he knows he can write about interestingly within the limits of a single paragraph, and to decide just what phase of the subject to write about.
2. To think it over before writing, so as to make a sort of mental outline of what he is going to write.
3. To use fairly short sentences, each of which has one and only one principal thought.
4. After the first writing, to correct and improve his paragraph, by reading it over several times, each time with a distinct object in view.
  - a) *The first time* to improve the paragraph as a whole; to put in facts or ideas forgotten; to use a more expressive verb here or a more telling adjective there; to make the ending as effective as possible: in general, to satisfy himself on the spot that he has done with the subject the best he knows how.
  - b) *The second time* to improve his sentence structure and his grammar; to note when a long sentence may be broken into two shorter ones with advantage, or when a succession of very short sentences, giving a "choppy" effect, may be made into slightly longer sentences, connected by some other words than "and", or "but", and other overworked connectives; to see that every verb agrees in number with its subject, and every pronoun with its antecedent.
  - c) *The third time* to make sure that every sentence begins with a capital and ends with the proper mark; to see that

commas are used where they are necessary to the sense; to run his eyes over the words to see that each is spelled correctly, particularly those words which have proved his downfall many times before.

Let it be remarked, in closing, that no child profits much from re-writing his composition. It is a good deal more sensible to let him apply what he has learned from his teacher's correction to a new composition. There are times, of course, when slovenly work must be penalized by compelling the perpetrator to do his work over. But the ordinary re-writing of papers, to secure a "high finish", is generally a waste of precious time.

## COPYING AND DICTATION AS AIDS IN TEACHING COMPOSITION.

The dictation exercise, if employed in moderation and with a clear understanding of its use, is valuable in helping to fix habits of written technicalities,—spelling, capitals, punctuation, and things of that sort. It performs the same office as abstract work in arithmetic. In the dictation exercise we isolate the forms of language and focus attention entirely upon them. In writing compositions the centre of attention is occupied by the content (the ideas that are coming to the surface for expression), while the technique (the writing, spelling, punctuation, etc.) is, or should be, removed to the margin of consciousness. In the dictation exercise these relative positions are reversed. The content comes to the pupil ready-made; he has to think only of the form.

In addition to its value in teaching and testing technicalities, the dictation exercise, if rightly managed, builds up, also, the power of sustained attention and concentration. Its never failing effect of restoring quiet in a restless class is an everyday evidence of its power to do this. Its value, in developing the power of concentration, however, depends very largely upon the way the teacher handles the exercise. The dictation may be too long; it may be uninteresting to the pupils; it may be

dictated poorly—indistinctly, too fast, too slowly, or with repetitions. Dictation is an exercise that requires as much care in preparation and skill in execution as any other kind of written composition. It is utterly useless in the hands of a teacher who because she has no other work prepared decides to “give them a little dictation”. She had better send to the office for the graphophone.

The dictation exercise is useful also in developing the power of self-criticism, because of the opportunity it affords pupils to correct their own papers in every minute detail by comparing them with the teacher’s blackboard copy (uncovered after the writing) or the printed original. No exercises are more important than exercises in which the pupil corrects his own written work. Careful and intelligent criticism of his own work fixes correct habits and develops a habit of discrimination which helps him to undertake new work more confidently and to execute it more accurately. The dictation exercise is an especially good starting point for training in self-correction, because here the field of criticism is limited to a small number of points, all of which have to do with the mechanics of writing, and all of which, besides, are arbitrarily determined by the matter dictated. A formula for correction, suited to the grade, may be written upon the board, or upon a card which each pupil has on his desk. Such a formula contains (let us say) the following points:

- |                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Indenting the paragraph. | 5. Comma.           |
| 2. Capitals.                | 6. Quotation marks. |
| 3. Periods.                 | 7. Spelling.        |
| 4. Apostrophe.              |                     |

The pupils are instructed at first to look through their papers for one kind of a mistake at a time, until they have gone through the list. They correct each error as they find it. In this way not many errors will escape them. After a while they will outgrow the need of the formula as a correction chart; but at the beginning it serves a very useful purpose. It helps to systematize the correction work, and impresses upon



the pupil's mind, more effectively than talking commonly can, what the big matters of written technique are.

In order to prevent any false notion as to the proper place of dictation work, teachers should bear in mind that it is an exercise which is almost wholly mechanical, and that *no amount of dictation alone will make good writers*. It is concerned with mechanical correctness alone. It is not of much value as a *teaching* exercise. Its chief value is in *testing*, not in *teaching*. It is not even a safe test of the knowledge of language forms. The proof of a pupil's mastery of the mechanics is not a correctly written dictation lesson, but his habitual observance of these matters in his daily writing. The pupil who begins all the sentences of a dictation paragraph with a capital and ends them with a period, may in his free writing display a gross lack of "the sentence feeling". The cadence of the teacher's voice and the natural pause which follows the close of a dictated sentence give him the cue as to when a period is required and where a capital must be employed.

The same is true in a lesser degree in respect to the other points of technique. Teachers, therefore, will make a mistake if they think they can teach correctness by much use of the dictation exercise. It is a good thing, if rightly used. *But it must be used with moderation and with the full knowledge that its chief value is to test the result of the teaching of the mechanics.*

Teachers are inclined sometimes to give an undue amount of dictation, because their class happens to be poorly grounded on the mechanics, and they postpone original work until a satisfactory condition obtains with respect to their pupil's grasp of technique. This is a double mistake. Correctness cannot be produced from much use of the dictation exercise, because the kind of correctness it teaches cannot be depended upon to carry over into the pupil's free writing. Moreover, to postpone original writing until the technique has been fully mastered is a violation of a vital principle of composition teaching, which is that *the motive for the mastery of form must come from the pupil's interest in a real and living content*. To drill for a long time for correctness is death to all interest. To permit

children to write without regard to form is quite as irrational. They must be trained simultaneously to develop the power of self-expression and the knowledge and the desire to express themselves on paper in accordance with the established rules of correct writing. To do this well, as has been said before, is the real test of the good teacher of written composition.

Copying is useful, as an *occasional* exercise, to train pupils in careful observation and exact expression. These are qualities sufficiently rare in grown-up people to suggest the need of some organized effort upon the part of the school to develop in children the power to see things straight and to report them straight. It is the experience of the Civil Service examiners that more people fail in the copying test than in any other. The standard of copying in all grades is exactness itself, though the matter presented in the lower grades should, of course, be much shorter and simpler than that which is given to older pupils to copy. The mere act of copying from time to time will not lead anywhere. Children must be taught *right habits of copying*. In the second grade, for example, the pupil should be taught to look at the whole word and then write the whole word, not to copy a letter or two, then look at the word again, and copy two or three more letters. Even in the lower grades, the smallest unit should be the word. As soon after as possible, children should learn to look at the whole sentence, and instead of copying it word by word, looking back each time to the printed page, they should copy a whole phrase at a time. Later on the pupils should take in the whole sentence at one glance, and produce it without referring to the copy.

Selections for copying for all grades should be interesting, and in the higher grades they should have real literary quality. National songs and selections frequently repeated orally (e. g., the salute to the flag) are suitable material for copying. It is notorious that children are seldom able to write such things correctly. This is because the words are mostly learned by ear.

A time limit should be set to exercises in copying, if a pupil's power of observation and accuracy are to be rightly



measured. A teacher cannot measure the power of all the individuals in her class if some are given twice as long as others to finish the same exercise. Above the fourth grade, work in copying should be required of those pupils only who have not become rapid and accurate copyists. A copying test should be given three or four times during each year above the fourth grade to determine who need to continue the work and who may be excused from it. This test should be timed, and the selection should be longer than can be done in the time allowed, so that the speed and accuracy of every pupil can be rated after the method of the Courtis tests. Any exercise in copying that does not keep every child on the tiptoe of alertness defeats its only purpose.

Children should be given material in their books to copy. They should not be asked to write from copy on the blackboard.

## PART TWO.

### ASSIGNMENT OF WORK BY GRADES.

#### FIRST GRADE.

*(The work of the First Grade is entirely oral.)*

##### I. Aims.

To encourage free talk about things that children are interested in.

To secure clear articulation and correct forms in everyday speech.

To lead children always to use the sentence in talking and in telling stories.

Children's talk should be free, spontaneous, and hearty. While encouraging self-expression, it is the teacher's task to guide and control the speech, to prevent mere babbling, and to make the exercise a pleasure to both listener and talker.

With regard to ability to express themselves, an average class will be found to be divided into the garrulous, the monosyllabic, and the inarticulate. The garrulous must not be suppressed, but directed,—“Tell me *one* thing about your doll.” The monosyllabic must be encouraged to expand a word into a sentence; next, to give two sentences, and finally, to tell the whole story. The inarticulate will soon follow the leaders and take part in this work; they form the rear guard here as in all other kinds of school work.

##### II. Topics.

Child's experiences at home;—helping mother, father; playthings; pets; holiday and Saturday good times.

Child's activities at school;—helping teacher, playmates; on the playground; the reading lesson; dramatization; story reproduction; picture lessons; games; holidays.

Observations of nature;—flowers, birds, animals; the seasons with their changes in earth, sky and air.

Stories read by the teacher or by the children.

First, as sources of material for oral composition, should come the child's own experience and observation. Second in importance comes the story told by the teacher, or read in class by the child himself. Not all stories, however, are fit for reproduction,—the short, simple story, with a clear *beginning*, a related *middle*, and a definite *end* is best. The first conception of orderly arrangement will come unconsciously to children by developing these three divisions in their reproduction.

### III. Illustrations.

A number of illustrations are given here to show what an interesting variety of oral work can be developed from the above mentioned sources and to indicate the general character of the oral work that should be sought after in the first grade. They are not put here to be drilled upon and memorized by children. They are illustrations pure and simple, and are not at all intended as subject matter to be learned by heart.

#### 1. *Suggestions for developing, guiding, and controlling first efforts:*

Illustration:

1. "Mollie had a birthday she was six she had a party I was there and I wore my new blue dress and we had ice cream."

Teacher:—"Tell me one thing about Mollie's birthday."

2. A suggestion from the teacher—(given on Friday).

"Tomorrow will be Saturday. I expect to take a walk. I think I shall see some little squirrels."

"Who is going to walk? What do you expect to see?"

3. A report from the teacher—(given on Monday).

"I went to walk on Saturday. I saw four little squirrels playing together."

"Who went to walk? What did you see? Tell me one thing."

4. Teacher:—"This is a bright, pleasant day. What do you like to do on such days? Tell me three things."

Child:—"This is a bright pleasant day.

I like to roll my hoop.

My dog likes to run with me."

5. Teacher:—"The weather is growing warmer every day. The birds are coming back. Tell me what one you saw first. Tell me what he is doing."

Child:—"The weather is growing warmer every day.

The birds are coming back.

I saw the robin first.

He is getting ready to build a nest."

6. Teacher:—"I saw three little boys playing horse in the street this morning. They seemed to enjoy it very much."

What do you like to play best?

Tell how you play.

Tell who plays with you."

## 2. *Suggestive talk on child's experiences at home.*

### HELPING.

In vacation, I helped my mother make four beds every day.

First, we turned the mattress.

Then we put on the sheets and spread.

We made it look very smooth.

Mother said I saved her many steps.

### PETS.

I have a canary.

He takes a bath every day.

Then he dries himself in the sun.

### PLAYTHINGS.

My doll has a little bedroom.

It has a bed and a table.

She has a little kitchen, too.

There is a stove in it.

### HOLIDAY.

This is the month of May.

There are thirty-one days in May.

Memorial Day comes on the thirtieth.

### SATURDAY.

Saturday I played soldier with my brothers.

My big brother was the captain.

The baby carried the flag.

I beat the drum.

3. *Suggestive talk on child's activities at school.*

## READING.

The little old woman made a gingerbread boy.  
He ran away from her and from the little old man.  
But he couldn't run away from the fox.

Boy Blue always wore blue clothes.  
One day, he fell fast asleep under a haycock.  
His sheep got into the meadow.  
His cows got into the corn.

## DRAMATIZATION.

The grasshopper played all summer long.  
He had no food when winter came.  
He asked Lady Ant for some of hers.  
But she wouldn't give him any.

## STORY REPRODUCTION.

The crow said, "I am so thirsty!  
I have had no water for a long time.  
I shall die pretty soon, I think.  
Ah! there is a pitcher.  
Now I shall get a drink."

## PICTURE.

I am a soldier boy.  
I am going to war.  
I am going to fight.  
I am taking my gun.

## GAMES.

I like to play "Squirrel".  
We all stand in a ring.  
One girl is the squirrel and runs around the ring.  
Another tries to catch the squirrel before she gets into her place.  
It is fun to chase the squirrel.

4. *Suggestive talk on Observations of Nature.*

## FLOWERS.

I picked some purple asters last Sunday.  
I brought them to school on Monday.  
I gave them to my teacher.

## BIRDS.

I saw a robin this morning.  
He went hopping along.  
I said, "How do you do?"  
He just shook his tail and flew away.

## ANIMALS.

I have a black kitty.  
She loves to catch mice.  
I like to play with her.

## TREES.

I wish I were an elm tree!  
The wind would set my leaves to dancing.  
The birds would build their nests in my branches.

## SNOW.

The snow is falling.  
The flakes are white.  
They are like stars.  
Let us catch some.

## WIND.

The wind called the little leaves.  
The red ones came.  
The yellow ones came, too.  
Then they all played together.

## APRIL.

April is here.  
See how bright and clear the sky is!  
See how green the grass is!  
I am glad April is here.

**IV. Preparation For Written Work.**

The seat work called for by both of the reading systems used in our schools is really the foundation for future written work, in that it constantly gives practice *in the construction of sentences*, in the placing of capital letters at the beginning of sentences and proper names, and in the placing of the closing period or question mark.

After the work of the initial stage of matching single words has been done, children should be required to make the full rhyme from the rhyme card or the complete sentence from the teacher's model on the blackboard. Here the opportunity occurs to correct any tendency to omit words, by having the reading of what has actually been made compared with what was intended to be made.

Next, children should be furnished with alphabet letter cards, and required to construct simple sentences, connected with the reading, from the teacher's blackboard model, using capitals and closing marks correctly.

During the last half of the year, simple, original sentences should be required, first using the word cards, and next, using the alphabet letters. This gives the child full responsibility for right use of capitals and closing marks.

*Illustrations of Seat Work as preparation for Written Work.*

ALDINE CLASSES.

The squirrel wants to play with me.  
The little squirrel is glad.  
The little squirrel jumps for joy.  
Little squirrel, jump for joy.  
Run, little squirrel, run!  
Play in the tree, little squirrel.  
The little squirrel plays in the rain.

TREADWELL CLASSES.

A boy had a goat.  
He ran away.  
He wanted some grass.  
He would not go home.  
He would not go for the boy.  
He would not go for the rabbit.  
He did go for the bee.

*Illustration of child's name and address:*

Mary Salitra,  
15 Common St.,  
Lawrence, Mass.

Before leaving the grade, children should make, with alphabet letters, their own names and addresses, and the name of their school. In addition, they should have acquired the habit of placing:

A capital letter at the beginning of their card-constructed sentences, in composing the names of persons, and in their use of the pronoun I.

A period or question mark at the close of sentences.

## V. Errors of Speech.

Re-read the chapter in the appendix on "Common Errors of Speech", to get a clear understanding of the principles and the methods that teachers should follow in training away the errors common to the speech of children.

This work should not be begun too early in the first grade. The teacher should, of course, take note from the very first of the errors made by the children, but she should be content for a while with gently and patiently substituting the right expression for the wrong one. For the important thing at the start is to secure spontaneity and free expression. After a little while the incorrect expression may safely be made a basis for special drill. The expressions drilled upon should, of course, be those which appear most frequently in the actual speech of the children. The drills on any expression, once begun, should be constant. No reasons need be given by the teacher to show why this form is right and the other wrong. What the child needs is plenty of opportunity for repetition of the correct form. The "language game" described and illustrated in the Appendix provides a happy method of securing the reiteration of the form the teacher may desire to impress. There is no end to the number of games that the ingenious teacher can plan to meet a single incorrect expression, e. g., the "I seen" habit.

The errors to be attacked in grade one are not many, but they are deep rooted in the speech of the children, and will require the untiring efforts of the teacher to get rid of them. They divide into four groups: (1) verb errors; (2) pronoun errors; (3) colloquialisms; (4) mispronunciations. The teacher in the primary grades, however, is not in her teaching to make any reference to these distinctions. They are so grouped throughout the course to suggest how the teacher is herself to classify the errors which she hears made frequently by her pupils and which are not listed here. Every teacher should supplement the printed errors by others that she has observed and noted. She should first, however, study the list of errors that are printed in the grades below and above her own. It is not worth while to attack some errors until later in the course.



On the other hand, there are some errors that must be rooted out in the low grades, if they are to be rooted out at all.

In the first grade, work to correct the following errors:

I seen him.  
I come to school.  
He be's sick.  
He ain't here.

I done it.  
I run all the way.  
He don't want to.  
I knowed it.

Me and him did it.  
My father, he said—

It was me.

Look't  
He took it off me.  
Lemme see it.

This after.  
Gimme that.  
I ain't got no book.

Once they was a man who—

## VI. Comments and Cautions.

Do not allow a voluble child to monopolize unduly the time of the class. Do not allow an impulsive child to relate some personal experience which is of small interest to other children. Time is too valuable to be wasted in this way. The talkative child must be wisely restrained, and the uncommunicative child encouraged.

Insist on clear utterances and a natural (not a schoolroom) tone of voice.

Don't interrupt the talker if you can help it, and correct in such a way that the child will be conscious only of the *help*. It is very harmful at this stage to arouse self-consciousness or a feeling of restraint.

Do all you can to cure the "and" habit.

Children are very imitative. Consequently it is necessary that the teacher should carefully watch her own use of

English. Without being too prim, she should insistently guard against slang, faulty idioms, grammatical errors, and provincial forms. She should cultivate habits of perfect enunciation, flexibility of tone, and a varied vocabulary. The teacher who cannot and does not talk well herself has no business to try to teach children to talk well.

Train children to drop the voice at the end of the sentence.

## SECOND GRADE.

### ORAL.

*(Four-fifths of the language time in the second grade is devoted to oral language.)*

#### I. Aims.

To secure more freedom and fluency in talking.

To lead children to tell what they have to say in an orderly manner, and to keep to the point.

To increase the power to use correct speech without rousing self-consciousness or a feeling of restraint.

To make children feel that distinct speech and a natural, pleasant tone of voice are as necessary to good talking as are interesting things to talk about.

To deepen the feeling for the sentence—never to let an “incomplete” sentence pass. Encourage use of the question sentence and the exclamation, for variety and effectiveness, without naming them or formally distinguishing them from the “telling” sentence.

#### II. Suggested Sources.

Child's experiences at home: Helping father, mother, sisters and brothers.

Talks on how to act helpfully and politely at home, at school, on the playground, and in public places.

Observation of the nature world.

Holidays.

Games.

Stories. Stories selected for reproduction should be short and simple. At the beginning of the term, those which bring out clearly the beginning, the middle, and the close should be used. Later in the term, children will be able to reproduce larger units, if they are helped to observe what happened first, what next, and so forth. Events may be told in turn by different children, and finally the whole story reproduced by one child.

Pictures. Pictures furnish admirable material for oral language. They should be full of life and action.

### III. Illustrations.

(Note:—It is to be understood that these are illustrations of the kind of oral work that second grade children should be trained to do. They are not put here as subject matter for children to be drilled upon and to repeat from memory.)

Using the material offered by the class, teacher and children should work together, at first, developing an orderly arrangement of ideas and interesting ways of presenting them.

Children should later be encouraged to give original sentences. The teacher and class together should offer suggestions for improving the order and arrangement of the sentences to make them more interesting. These should be written on the board by the teacher, to serve as a copying lesson later.

#### EXPERIENCES AT HOME.

I take care of the geranium.  
I water it every day.  
Yesterday I spilled some water on the floor.  
The pitcher was too full.

#### NATURE.

Walter's garden is in the back yard.  
He planted morning glory seeds and tulip bulbs.  
The morning glory seeds have come up.  
The tulips will be in blossom in a week.

#### STORY REPRODUCTION.

A thirsty crow saw some water in a pitcher.  
He could not get it.  
Then the wise bird dropped many little stones into the pitcher.  
The water rose and the crow took his drink.

#### PICTURES.

I am Captain John.  
Do you see the sword in my hand?  
My army is marching.  
"Left, right, left, right" says the drum.  
The last boy is carrying the flag.

We are playing Blind Man's Buff.  
My brother Max is the blind man.  
I'm hiding behind the post.  
There! he's coming! he's coming!  
I hope he won't catch me!

#### GAMES.

There are swings on the Common.  
I like to swing very much.  
After I have been swinging for a while, I get out and give  
someone else a chance.

#### ANIMALS.

I have a little kitten.  
Her name is Tricks.  
Tricks is very cute.  
She pulls at my shoe laces, and at my dress.  
She always climbs up in my lap.  
Would you like to see my kitty?

#### HOW TO TREAT A VISITOR.

Yesterday, we had a visitor in our room.  
When she came in, Edith gave her a chair.  
When we read, we did our best.  
We like to have people visit our class.

### IV. Common Errors of Speech.

The teacher should read over the chapter on "Common Errors of Speech" in the Appendix. She should also re-read the notes printed under this heading in the first grade. Keep in mind the groupings of the errors, as there explained, but do not discuss the "grammar" of them with the pupils. Study the list of errors in all the grades, but confine your work mostly to those of your grade and the grade below. They will keep you busy. Use some "language game" every day. You will find plenty of them in the chapter on "The Language Game" in the Appendix. If they do not suit you, make up some of your own. Language games may be played at any time during the day,—to fill up a few odd minutes here and there, or as a change after a period of concentrated work in number or phonics.

In the second grade, work on these errors:

We sung it.  
We et it.  
I writed my name.  
My pencil is broke.  
You was afraid.  
I can't find it no place.  
I ain't got no book.

I done it.  
He knowed me.  
I seen it.  
It's tore.  
I brought it home.  
We drawed a robin.  
He hadn't ought to go.  
He don't need a book.

He did it hisself.  
Me and him went.

Them kind ain't good.

I got it off a him.  
Are they any school?  
She told on him.  
Look't here.

He is the one what did it.  
He didn't give me none.  
I was to home.

I wash me own self.  
He would of gone.  
I hat to go.  
They was six hooks.

Gimme that pencil.  
I donno.  
I'm thinkin.

## V. Comments and Cautions.

Avoid rousing self-consciousness by too many criticisms.

Insist on careful pronunciation of final syllables ending in g, t, d.

Remember that "so" and "then" are habits as bad as the "and" habit.

Banish the "run-on" sentence from your children's talk, if you can.

Teach children to drop the voice at the ends of their sentences.

## PREPARATION FOR WRITING.

During the first half of the year the alphabet card seat work, started in the first grade, should be reviewed and extended.

In review, children should first *make sentences from the teacher's model* on the blackboard. These sentences may be based on the reading lessons, or on the topics discussed in the oral composition period. The pupil's work should always be inspected by the teacher. Her method of correcting faults should be such as to teach the children to correct their own, and to establish the tendency to look their work over for correction before the teacher inspects it. They should be trained to look it over first to see if all of the words are there; they should look again, to see if the closing marks are correctly used.

In extending the work, children should be required to make *sentences independent of a model*. These may be reproduction from memory of those occurring in a reading lesson, in a preceding oral composition lesson, or they may be original. Such work throws upon the class full responsibility for right spelling and correct use of capitals and closing marks. But whatever the source of these sentences, the teacher must guard against incorrect spelling, and if she finds it necessary, should assign the topic herself, and prevent misspelling by placing on the blackboard for children's use, while working, words of whose spelling the class may not be certain. The work of inspection should be continued, and the habit of self-correction strengthened by requiring children to look over the work before the teacher does, once for omission of words; again, for correct use of punctuation and capitals; and a third time for correct spelling.

## WRITTEN.

(Note:—Written work in the second grade does not begin until the second half of the year. Only one-fifth of the language time is given to written work.)



## I. Aims.

To have the written work grow naturally out of the oral work through copying the improved sentences which were prepared by teacher and pupil together in the oral period.

To teach the few simple technicalities involved in putting the oral work into written form.

To develop power to write correctly several related sentences on a given topic, *without* the teacher's co-operation, but always under her *supervision*.

To develop the power of thinking out the sentence before writing it.

## II. Lines of Work.

### I. SENTENCES.

a. Copying from the blackboard, the sentences prepared with the teacher's co-operation during the oral period.

b. Writing the same from dictation, each child comparing his finished product with the teacher's correct copy on the board.

c. Writing on the blackboard several related sentences. These may be on a suggested subject, or original. They should be read by the writer, and the listening class should be trained to comment on the interesting quality, and notice if the arrangement is good.

The writer should explain his use of punctuation marks somewhat as follows:

"I have a little kitten. Her name is Tricks. Would you like to see her?"

"*I* is always written as a capital when it is alone. There is a period after the first sentence, because it tells something. *Her* begins with a capital letter, because it is the first word in the sentence. *Tricks* begins with a capital letter, because it is the name of the kitten. There is a period after *Tricks*, because the sentence tells something. *Would* begins with a capital letter, because it is the first word of the sentence. There is a question mark after the sentence, because it asks a question."

d. Writing *occasionally* from dictation a few sentences to test the grasp of technical points.

e. Writing occasionally the reproduction of a brief story, as a test of the pupils' grasp of the points of the story in their logical sequence.

### III. Suggested Topics For Sentence Writing.

These will be found grouped under Section II in the outline for oral composition in this grade.

### IV. Technicalities.

1. *Capitals.* Beginning sentences, names of persons, of places, days of the week, months of the year, the name of the school, the letters I and O.

2. *Period.* At the close of the telling sentence. After the abbreviations Mr., Mrs., St.

3. Question mark at the close of a question sentence.

4. Punctuation marks used in the writing of the pupil's name and address, as learned through the alphabet card work during the first year and the first half of the second year.

### V. Words For Special Spelling Drill.

Note:—Re-read the chapter on "The Misspelling of Common Words" in the Preface.

again	knew	their
any	know	there
asked	leaving	they
buy	loving	too
can't	making	tried
coming	many	using
cried	much	very
does	near	want
don't	off	went
dropped	once	when
drowned	only	where
fairy	running	which
first	school	whole
goes	shining	whose
having	some	won't
heard	sure	write
higher	taking	

**VI. Second Year Standards.**

The following groups of sentences are printed here to indicate about the sort of "written composition" the ordinary child should be able to write *at the end of the second year*. Some second grade pupils will be capable of writing longer and better ones. A few will not be able to write as well as the printed standards require. The majority of the pupils, however, should, if given a subject they feel like writing about, be able to produce three or four sentences, somewhat like the ones printed below. They should be able to do this with a fair degree of facility, and with no assistance from the teacher except what is derived from the oral preparation. The sentences should show some sense of sequence, and the desire to be interesting. They should be invariably correct in the matter of capitals and ending marks. The pupil's power should always be measured by the first writing, not by a corrected and re-written copy.

Mabel's Teddy Bear is brown.  
He has black eyes.  
They are always open.  
He wears a pink bow.

We saw a hand organ this morning.  
A monkey was sitting on it.  
He held out a red cap.  
I put a cent in it.

My name is .....  
I live at ..... street.  
I go to the ..... school.  
The principal's name is .....  
My teacher's name is Miss .....

We went to the circus.  
We saw some pretty horses.  
The clowns made us all laugh.

This is a rainy day.  
We can't go out at recess.  
We will play games in the school room.

We saw the moon last night.  
It looked like a boat.  
It sailed in the blue sky.

I cut a big Christmas Tree out of green paper.  
I cut some little candles out of red paper.  
I put them on the tree.

Our school begins at half past eight.  
I always get there early.  
We do not like to have children late.

When the bell for fire drill rings, we stop work.  
We leave the room quickly.  
We do not talk or play.

Mary had a birthday,  
Her mother gave her a ring.  
It has a blue stone.  
It fits her third finger.

## VII. Comments and Cautions.

Keep the sentences simple. If you do, "and" and "but" and "so" will not have a chance to get rooted in the child's written language. It is bad enough to have to deal with them in his oral language.

The amount of writing in the second grade should be small. There is no gain in urging children to write much before their experience in writing is sufficient to save them from a multitude of errors.

Encourage free expression in the writing. Praise every sign of originality. By being too critical of his written sentences you may kill the pupil's desire to write at all.

## THIRD GRADE.

### ORAL.

*(Four-fifths of the language time in the third grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

To secure more orderly talking than in previous grades; to keep to the point; to tell things in the right order of time and event.

To teach children to think a sentence through before speaking it.

To form the habit of speaking every word distinctly, of making one's self heard, of using a natural tone of voice.

To train the pupils to be good listeners.

#### II. Suggested Sources.

##### HOME LIFE.

Topics bearing upon helpfulness at home, and in all relations with playmates, younger children, the old and feeble, animals; matters of personal appearance and conduct.

##### SCHOOL LIFE.

Discussion in simple terms of the necessity and value of co-operating with others; developing a class pride, a school spirit; helpfulness to teacher shown by promptness, obedience, care of school property within and without the building, good manners, courtesy to visitors.

##### COMMUNITY LIFE.

The development of civic pride; ways of helping the street, fire and health departments; ways of preventing accidents on the street, on street cars; ways of preventing quarreling at play; how to be a good neighbor; behavior in public places.

##### NATURE LIFE.

Observation of seasonal changes in nature, bird and animal

life. The teacher who loves nature and knows intimately her work, or who will set herself to learn a little of it, has an exhaustless store of subjects for oral language, even though her pupils live in the most populous tenement district of a mill city.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

Saturday good times; Sunday walks at different seasons; holidays; description of toys; of pets; games played at home, at school, indoors, out of doors; the policeman, fireman, postman and their work; the milkman, grocer, butcher, shoemaker, carpenter, and their work; directions for making something, for playing a game; short stories for reproduction; pictures (choose those that suggest a story rather than those that suggest description of object seen).

### III. Suggestions as to Use of the Material in Section II.

1. To develop from a single topic several different groups of interesting sentences arranged in good order.

Illustration:—

“The Fun That Spring Days Bring.”

(Sentences contributed by the children.)

Flowers are gathered in the meadow by girls.

Girls play hop-scotch.

Boys fly kites and play marbles.

Sometimes boys go fishing.

Every boy plays ball.

Showing variety and good order in the arrangement of the above sentences, made by individual pupils:

No. 1.

What fun we have in Spring!

Girls jump rope.

Boys fly kites and play marbles.

No. 2.

How glad I am it is Spring!

Little girls play hop-scotch.

Every boy plays ball.

No. 3.

Oh! How nice Spring is!  
Little girls gather flowers in the meadows.  
Boys go fishing.

2. To improve the quality of the sentence through imitation of a model given by the teacher.

Teacher's Model.

The First Snowstorm.

What a stormy day! The snow is piling up in drifts. It comes in at the windows. I have to play in the house.

Child's Imitation.

A Winter Day.

(Modeled on the above.)

What a cold day it is! Jack Frost has come at last. He sends the leaves flying. I have to play in the house, or he will bite my nose.

Teacher's Model.

The Humming Bird.

Can you see that little bird? He is a little humming bird and he comes to swing in my tree every morning. When the wind blows and the branches sway, he is very happy.

Children's Imitations:

The Robin.

There is a little robin in the grass. How fat he is! His breast is bright red. He sings very sweetly every morning.

The Sparrow.

There is a sparrow on the topmost bough. He is building his nest. There he goes now to get some more straw.

The Canary.

At home we have a little canary. He has yellow and white feathers. His feathers are very smooth. He sings very sweetly.

The Robin.

Look at that baby robin! His mother is teaching him to fly. Look at him eating that worm!



#### IV. Examples of Oral Composition.

It is to be understood that these examples are to be considered as illustrations only. They are not to be used as material for memorizing or for imitating in too slavish a fashion. They are put here as suggestions to teachers, and not as subject matter for children.

##### HOME LIFE.

I help my mother set the table every day. First, I put on the knives and forks. Next, I put on the spoons. Then I put the chairs up to the table.

##### SCHOOL LIFE.

Yesterday we made penwipers. We cut three circles out of cloth. The first one was small. The second was a little larger. The third was the largest of all. We fastened the three circles together with a brad.

##### COMMUNITY LIFE.

When I cross the street, I walk to the corner first. I look both ways. If a car or an auto is coming, I wait until it passes.

My letter carrier wears a gray suit with brass buttons. He carries a leather bag over his shoulder. In this bag he puts the mail. He blows a whistle when he comes to the door.

##### SATURDAY GOOD TIMES.

Saturday morning, Annie and I played we were fairies. We made wings of paper for our dresses. We had a good time.

##### HOLIDAYS.

Christmas Day comes in two weeks. I have a quarter to spend for presents. I think I shall buy a glass for my mother to put flowers in.

##### SOMETHING TO MAKE.

Do you know how to make a Jack-o-lantern? Take a big yellow pumpkin and cut off the top. Scoop out the inside clean. Then cut the eyes, nose, and mouth. Put a lighted candle inside, and put the top on again.

##### STORY.

The beautiful morning sunshine was streaming in at the window. Little Herbert saw it shining on a chair. He thought that if the sun was on it, no one could sit on it. He went for a towel. He tried to wipe the sunsh'ne off the chair. He rubbed and rubbed until he was tired and still the sunshine was there.

## STORY TO BE FINISHED.

## The Crow and The Pitcher.

I am so thirsty! I have had no water to drink for a long time. If I do not find some water soon, I shall die. Ah, there is a pitcher. Perhaps . . . . .

## PICTURES.

Mr. and Mrs. Squirrel lived in a hollow tree. They had five little ones, who wore pretty gray coats. One day Jack Frost told Papa Squirrel that he would bring snow soon. Mr. Squirrel hurried home to tell the folks. He said they must gather plenty of food for the winter. The little squirrels got great heaps of grain and nuts in their home in the tree. Pretty soon down came the snow, but the squirrels did not care, for they had a good warm home and plenty to eat.

## V. Errors of Speech.

The teacher should re-read the chapter on "Common Errors of Speech" in the Appendix, and the notes under this heading in the grades below and above her own. The grouping is the same always: (1) verb errors, (2) pronoun errors, (3) colloquialisms, (4) mispronunciations, but the teacher is not to mention grammatical distinctions. Right use of language comes from *habit*, not from knowledge of terms or rules. Speech forms come to the child largely *through the ear*. Repetition fixes the habit of speech, whether it be good or bad. Speech is a matter of the spinal cord rather than of the mind. When the child said, "Can I have a piece of pie?" "May I!" corrected the mother. Then the child said, "May I have a piece of pie?" and the mother answered, "Yes, you can." The knowing mind said "may", the spinal cord said "can"; therefore, the tongue said "can".

The "language game" (see Appendix) is the most effective method of getting the right forms to "sound right" to the child. Use the games every day, but do not work a few of them to death. When the "game" spirit wears off, half the good is gone.

I done it.  
 I et the apple.  
 I seen him take it.  
 Leave him do it.  
 I ain't got no book.  
 He don't know.  
 Has John went yet?

I seen it.  
 That ain't mine.  
 He never give me a pen.  
 My pencil is broke.  
 I trun the core away.  
 She brung it to school.  
 You was down there.

Here is yourn.  
 Me aunt is sick.

Him and me done it.  
 Them are mine.

I'm after doing my work.  
 Do like I did.  
 These kind are bad.  
 This is the boat what I went on.

Can I get a pen off him?  
 I was to school.  
 I am all better.  
 I can't find it nowhere.  
 See what you're at.

My mother is worsen.  
 The boy was almost drowned.  
 My teacher's name is Mrs ....

Be you a-goin'?  
 Gimme a cent.  
 I was late, 'cause I went  
 to the store.

They was nobody to be seen.

I hurted me.

## VI. Comments and Cautions.

The teacher should do as little talking as possible. The exercise is not to train her, but her pupils.

Get rid of the "stringy" sentence.

The oral language period is not for entertainment, but for the training in language power. All children, therefore, should take part, not merely the voluble children or those who are naturally good talkers.

Never let the conversation drag aimlessly to no destination. As soon as interest begins to fail, the topic has served its purpose, and another should be taken.

It is of no use to say good things unless one speaks loud enough to be heard.

Faultfinding and interruption to correct errors discourage. Sympathy and patience bring improvement from the slowest.

Remember that it is not enough for a child to say another's work is "good", "interesting", or "I like it". He must tell *why*. Expect every child to listen attentively, that he may be able to speak definitely of the work done.

Constant practice in oral expression in the lower grades will make the correct formal expression on paper later a comparatively easy task. For the child who has learned to think clearly—and no one can talk intelligently without thinking clearly—will find little difficulty in mastering the mechanical art of putting that thought into writing.

Teach your children to drop the voice at the end of the sentence.

## WRITTEN.

*(Only one-fifth of the language time in the third grade is given to written work.)*

### I. Aims.

To make the written work a natural outgrowth of the oral work by having children copy sentences prepared by the class and teacher in the previous oral lesson.

Using these sentences as models, to develop power to produce *original* work on similar topics.

To develop power to write *independently* a few interesting sentences on a given topic.

To make habitual the correct use of the technicalities assigned to the grade.

### II. Lines of Work.

Copying original sentences which have been written on the blackboard by the teacher, after discussion and criticism by class. No sentence should be thus written until it is found

to be well constructed. The group of sentences should next be studied for improvement in order and arrangement.

Writing the same from dictation. Each child should learn to correct his own paper by comparing it with the teacher's correct copy on the blackboard.

Original, independent work should be done, based upon the model worked out by class and teacher in co-operation.

Blackboard work should be done often, several children being sent to the board at once to write a few connected sentences on a given subject. There should be no formal preparation for this work by discussion and criticism as heretofore. The direction should be: "Write about . . . . . ." In this way, the responsibility for producing well-constructed and interesting work lies wholly with the writer. Judgment may be formed as to his possession of sentence feeling, connectives, and other technicalities. Each should read his own production, giving the reason for the use of each capital and punctuation mark.

Occasional exercises in dictation should be given for the purpose of furnishing practice in the use of the required technical points, and for testing accuracy. In this work, children should be trained to close concentration during dictation. A sentence should be given but once. Repetition results in inattention.

Occasional exercises should be given in reproducing stories that children have found interesting in the oral period. Four or five sentences should be the maximum requirement. Like other written work in this grade, the first work in reproduction should be copying the well-told story; next, writing it from dictation. During the last half of the year, there should occasionally be independent writing of some short and simple well-liked story.

### III. Suggested Topics.

The topics for oral composition suggested for this grade are equally suitable for the written work. The teacher is therefore referred to the second section of the oral outline for this grade.

#### IV. Technicalities.

*Capital letter* beginning sentences, names of persons, of places, days of the week, months of the year, the name of our state, our city, of child's own school.

*Period* at the end of a telling sentence, after the abbreviations of names of days, of months; after Mr., Mrs., St., Mass.

*Question mark* after questions.

*Exclamation mark* after exclamations.

#### V. Words For Special Spelling Drill.

(The words in italics are repeated from the second grade list.)

*asked*  
*buy*  
*coming*  
*dropped*  
*fairy*  
*heard*  
*know*

*making*  
*shining*  
*their*  
*there*  
*they*  
*too*  
*tried*

*went*  
*when*  
*which*  
*whose*  
*write*  
*wrote*

afraid  
all right  
almost  
already  
always  
beginning  
busy  
children  
clothes  
color  
doctor  
early  
easy  
enough  
father

February  
forty  
friend  
great  
guess  
its  
laughed  
lose  
loose  
money  
month  
none  
often  
people  
please

quite  
right  
Saturday  
speak  
though  
together  
truly  
Tuesday  
until  
Wednesday  
whose  
women  
would  
writing

#### VI. Written Standards.

The following paragraphs are thought to represent a fair standard of the kind and quality of written composition that should be expected of children at the end of the third grade.

They are all based upon topics which have been suggested as practicable for this grade. No one of the paragraphs is more than five sentences long. All of the sentences are simple sentences. Every paragraph contains a bit of personal interest.

A few children in every class will be able to write longer and better compositions than the standard for the grade represents. They will be able to write longer sentences also. Gifted pupils like these should not be restrained by the limitations of the grade standard; but they should be at all times held to strict account in matters of *correct* writing. A few children, on the other hand, will not be able to write as well as the standard. But the majority of every grade class should *at the end of that year* be able to write a paragraph of the character and length of those printed here, composed of sentences grammatically complete, correctly capitalized and punctuated, and free from misspelled words. They should be able to do this without oral preparation. The first writing, it should be understood, is the measure of the pupil's power. The corrected and re-written copy is worthless as a standard of ability in written composition.

#### HOME.

Mother has been away a whole week. It is very lonesome without her. I wish she would come home.

This is Mother's birthday. After breakfast we gave her our presents. Mine was a pretty bookmark. I made it in school.

#### SCHOOL.

Yesterday afternoon we played school. We all wanted to be the teacher. So we agreed to draw lots. I was the lucky one.

Last Friday we had a spelling match. I spelled "beginning" wrong. I shall never spell it wrong again.

Sometimes my teacher lets me stay after school. I clean the blackboard for her. I put the books in a neat pile.

I think music is the best of all our school lessons. I like to sing the song about the rabbit. The Christmas songs are good, too. Sometimes I sing alone.



## IN GENERAL.

I am a paper kite. I fly high above the earth. I can see the whole city. The houses look very small. The people seem to be one inch high.

One day last week I saw something bright lying in the gutter. It looked just like a nickel. I stopped and picked it up. It was only a tin tag.

This is how we play "Squirrel". First our teacher chooses a squirrel. Then we all put our heads on the desk. Next, the squirrel taps some child on the head. That child tries to catch the squirrel.

REPRODUCTION. (There should be little of this.)

Some birds were sick. A cat went to see them. He called himself a doctor. But the birds would not let him in. They did not want that kind of a doctor.

**VII. Comments and Cautions.**

In each grade stress is put upon a few things. The teacher should make sure that these are positively and usefully known. Succeeding teachers must not let this knowledge and habit lapse.

The fact that in the third grade the sentences are for the first time cast into the form of a paragraph, instead of each new sentence starting on a new line will tend to produce "the child's error" (see foreword on "The Sentence") upon the part of children who have not yet the "sentence habit" strongly established. Teachers in this grade must, therefore, make a good deal of this fundamental thing in writing English. The sentence idea, or sentence sense, is not an easy one for some children to get. Children must be taught early to distinguish between a sentence and a group of words that is not a sentence. There is no need of lugging in grammar to teach the distinction. It is the *thought* that tells the child what a sentence is, not subjects and predicates and other grammatical considerations.

Pupils cannot too early be taught the habit of looking over all written work before handing it in, in order to correct their mistakes.

Keep the written sentences simple. Try to get a little variety in the beginnings of sentences, but don't expect too much. Study the standards for the grade, and be satisfied if your pupils turn off sentences as good as those.

## FOURTH GRADE.

### ORAL.

*(Three-fourths of the language time in the fourth grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

Training in speaking on one's feet cannot begin too early in the school course. The pupil's first efforts will be crude, and perhaps discouraging; but it is only through continued practice under patient and sympathetic direction that the pupil can reach the ultimate state of ease and fluency.

In this grade aim especially to secure clearness of thought. Try to teach them to distinguish between the unimportant and the important. Teach children to think over what they have to say before you let them talk.

Teach your pupils these fundamental things:

- (1) To open their mouths when they speak.
- (2) To speak in a clear, low voice—low in the sense of being in the natural register of the child's voice, not in the high-pitched "school room" tone—yet loud enough to be heard distinctly in all parts of the room.
- (3) To sound final g's, t's, d's and th's, and to take pains to pronounce correctly such words as "children", "this afternoon", etc.

#### II. Examples of Oral Composition.

These examples of children's oral composition are intended to indicate about the kind of work fourth grade pupils should be able to do at the end of the year. The range of topics that may be used is as wide and as varied as are children's experiences. From their life at home, on the streets, in school; from their sports, amusements, duties, tasks; from the things they have seen and heard and felt and done; from the things they have read and the things they imagine: from all these sources may be drawn an infinite variety of interesting material.

The topics suggested for written composition in this course of study are just as good for oral composition as for written composition. Nor is the oral treatment so very much different in this grade from the treatment of the written topic. It is composition in just as true a sense as the written work, except that it is not put down on paper. Many times it is well to have a pupil write out any exceptionally interesting oral composition that he has contributed.

It is to be borne in mind that the power of children in oral composition runs considerably ahead of their power in written composition. In the examples a good many of the sentences are longer and more complex than in the written standards for this grade, which are still composed largely of simple sentences. Teachers must, of course, not allow the use of the longer sentence in the oral work if the pupils do not use it well. Bring everybody down to the use of simple sentences whose sentences incline toward looseness and awkwardness, until he can be trusted with the longer sentence. At the same time do not hold to the simple sentences pupils who naturally use the longer sentence well.

It is a more difficult thing to judge the excellence of spoken language than that of written language, because the impression of the former is so fleeting and so intangible. The teacher must, therefore, train herself to keep one ear open to the *style* of the pupil speaking, while the other is engaged in listening to the *things* he has to say. If every teacher could once or twice a year have a stenographer take down the oral compositions of her class and put them into type for her exactly as they were spoken, it would help her teaching of oral language more than anything else in the world.

All of the following examples were taken from the actual oral work of children in the fourth grade.

#### A Pet of Mine.

I have a pet hen that I like very much. I call her the little red hen. At morning I feed and water her. At noon I run home as fast as I can to feed her. Every night before I go into the house, I look to see if she is safe. At night when I am in bed, I am thinking if she is safe.

### My Garden.

Last year, I had four beds of morning glories. I watered them every night. One night I saw some buds. I was glad then. So I put some strings up to my bedroom window. In two months they were up to the window. They made a sort of tent. Some of them were pink, and some were blue. They were very pretty.

### My Report Card.

When I got home the first month with my card, my mother sighed. She said if I had "Whispers" again on my card, she would come up to school. I did not want her to, so I never whispered very much after that. Now it says "Good" every month. Last month, it said "Good work in reading and language".

### Saturday Good Times.

On Saturday mornings, a girl and I go to a gymnasium class on Lawrence Street. We do folk dances and play games. Some of the folk dances we do are "The Shoemaker" and "See-Saw". We march and play different games. We have much fun. We begin about nine o'clock and stop at ten o'clock. There is another class with older girls in it.

## III. Common Errors of Speech.

The teacher who has studied the lists of errors in the grades below the fourth (as she ought to do) will find many of them repeated here. As is shown in the introduction to the Chapter on "The Language Game" (see Appendix) the errors children make in their speech, like their errors in spelling, are really few. A dozen verbs, for example, are responsible for one-sixth of all the errors made in their speech. There is only one way to overcome these errors and that is to expose children for some period every day to the sound of right form. They must say it and hear it, over and over again. Correct speech in young children is a matter of the *ear*. Don't waste time in trying to show *why* this form is right and the other wrong. Use the language game freely. These games should be short and lively. They should never run over five minutes. They should be so devised as to give every pupil a chance to use as many times as possible the correct form chosen for the day's practice.

I done it.  
 He come back.  
 We drawed a bird's nest.  
 I brung it to him.  
 There was about seven boys there.  
 He trun it to me.  
 We have saw them.

I seen it.  
 Where was you?  
 My book is tore.  
 It ain't so.  
 My pencil is broke.  
 You hadn't ought to do it.  
 That don't make me laugh.  
 Look what I done to that paper.

Them are easy.  
 He can't run as fast as me.

They are wrong theirselves.  
 Me and Frank will go.

Can I get a book off Mary?  
 My sister learned me to sew.  
 Where shall I bring them to?  
 The baby got sick on us.  
 Sing it like John does.  
 Can I have a drink?

John stayed at home.  
 She sits in back of me.  
 Leave me do it.  
 Where are you at?  
 She never does nothin'.  
 He be's always whispering to me.

Ketch the ball!  
 Lemme have that.  
 I c'n git it.

They was an old man there.  
 Are they any school?

#### IV. Comments and Cautions.

The child learns to talk correctly by talking under careful direction, just as he learns to read by reading, and to write by writing. There must, therefore, be daily systematic, persistent, and patient training in talking in every grade from the first to the eighth.

If in the arithmetic class a child should say, "2x3 are 5", would his teacher say "6" and pass on? Then why when a boy says, "We come home last night", should she say *sotto voce*, "We came home," and let the matter pass at that. The boy is so intent upon his thought that he repeats what his teacher says without mental reaction, and unless something be done later to rescue the correction from that indefinite region known as the sub-consciousness, the teacher may as well save her breath. If she does not wish to interrupt him while he is talking, she certainly must take time at the first free moment to go back to

his error and require a correction. If the mistake is one he habitually makes, some scheme must be devised to keep him conscious and watchful, for nothing short of eternal vigilance will eradicate the evil.

The teacher must do everything she can to take away the self-consciousness of her pupils. She should be quick to find signs of power as well as evidence of weakness.

Time should not be wasted in aimless, haphazard talk.

Look out for the "rising inflection".

## WRITTEN.

*(One-fourth of the language time in the fourth grade is given to written work.)*

### I. Aims.

The various lines of work suggested for the third year should be carried forward. The paragraphs, upon topics mainly drawn from the children's experience, should grow slightly in length, and give evidence of a little growth in the sequence and connection of the sentences. The quantity of the writing must not be permitted to increase at the expense of correctness. It is better to have a paragraph of four or five good sentences, than one of twice the number carelessly done. Remember that the written work forms but a very small part of the language work of this grade, and be sure that the oral work is never slighted to gain time for perfecting the written work.

Here for the first time the letter is introduced, and is to hold a very important place in the written work of the grade. A discussion of letter writing in school and a number of models of letters will be found under the proper section of the year's work.

Children should all the time increase in their mastery of the mechanics of written work and in their capacity to criticise their own composition.



## II. Lines of Work.

### I. SENTENCES.

Much care should be taken during the year to hammer home "the sentence idea", which is so fundamental in writing. Either it is a difficult thing for some children to get, or we have neglected to teach it, or we have taught it poorly, for a great many children in the upper grammar grades do not seem to know when one sentence ends and the next one begins. Or, if they know, they have not yet "got the habit" of beginning their sentences with a capital and ending them with a period.

There are many ways of driving home the sentence idea:

- (a) Let the teacher give orally groups of words, some which make sentences, and others not. After each one, let pupils tell whether it is a sentence or not, giving the reason.
- (b) Children may be required to make sentences out of the non-sentence groups.
- (c) The same exercises may be written on the board.
- (d) Let the children give groups of words, and let other children tell whether the given group is a sentence or not, always giving reasons.
- (e) The children may be required to complete the non-sentence group.

It is both unnecessary and unwise to confuse fourth grade children by introducing the grammar of the sentence. The idea of the completed thought is all-sufficient.

### 2. PARAGRAPH COMPOSITIONS.

The standard paragraphs printed in the Third Grade outline suggest the kind of original composition work that should be continued this year. Keep the sentences simple and the paragraphs short. There are fifty paragraph topics printed in the outline for the fourth grade; but teachers are at liberty to choose from the subjects of any grade for this purpose. The list of subjects is meant to be suggestive, not prescriptive. Teachers are welcome to use their own subjects, so long as they are *concrete*, *personal*, and *brief*.

Fourth grade paragraphs should be free from the misspelling of the common words upon which special drill has been given from the first grade up.

### 3. LETTERS.

The letter is the only kind of composition that every child will have to write after he leaves school. For that reason the school should give much practice in letter writing. If the children who leave the grammar school cannot write a correct letter, our work in written composition is a joke.

In the interests of teaching economy, one form of the friendly letter, one form of the business letter, and one form for addressing the envelope are printed in an Appendix to this course, which are to be used by all teachers in all the grades, regardless of their personal preferences or predilections. After the children leave school, they may modify this form as much as they like, but while they are in school they will be required to conform to the school standard.

The form, or arrangement, of the letter is a matter wholly separate from the writing of the letter itself. It is a matter of pure technique and should be taken up as such. Thus, a letter should be placed on the board, or hektographed, and the attention of the pupils called to the mechanical placing of the several parts. After sufficient study, the letter should be *copied* by the pupils. The letters that the teacher puts before the children for study of the form, should be models of letter writing as well as of correctness of mechanical arrangement. The body of the letters so used should be short (not more than five or six sentences in the fourth grade), but they ought to read like real letters from real children. You will find some letters of this sort later on in this section. Nothing should be said about the body of these letters at this time, but the children will catch the spirit of them without comment from the teacher. Later on, these same letters, or others, should be *dictated* to test the children's knowledge of the form. All models presented children should conform strictly in arrangement and punctuation to the standard letter form adopted for this course of study.

When the form has been well taught, the work of writing *original* letters should begin. It is the almost universal experience of teachers that the letters which children write in school are painfully unnatural and uninteresting. That is because they have usually no real letter to answer, no real person to write to, and no reason or desire at that particular time to write any kind of a letter to anybody. It is a horrible example of the necessity of "having to say something" instead of the satisfaction of "having something to say". So far as it is possible, therefore, the letters written in school should be real letters to real people. Otherwise, the motive is wanting, and the letters, while they may be even uncomfortably correct in respect to form, are likely to be painfully artificial and dull. In order to get the effect of realism, teachers should therefore contrive some scheme of actual correspondence. The resourceful teacher does not need to be told how.

Only friendly letters are undertaken in the fourth grade. These should contain one paragraph only. They should have to do with interesting occurrences at home, in school, on holidays, or special occasions; with invitations to share good times; with appreciation of pleasures shared; with sympathy for sickness or mishaps. The following letters may be helpful to teachers as illustrations of the sort of letters fourth grade children ought to be able to write at the end of the school year. The full letter form is not carried out in these illustrations.

Dear Mary,

I am taking piano lessons. I practise one hour every day. I can play a waltz. Come over Saturday and hear it.

Your cousin,

.....

Dear John,

A week from to-day will be my birthday. I am to have a party at four o'clock. I wish you would come.

Your friend,

Fred.

Dear Fred,

I cannot be at your birthday party because I am going away with Father. I shall not be home again for a week. You know how sorry I am to miss the fun.

Your friend,

John.

Dear Uncle,

You are so far away. I am afraid you didn't hear the good news. Both Mary and I are to be promoted to Grade V. Isn't that fine? Father and Mother are as happy as we are.

Your loving nephew,

.....

Dear Mrs. Brown,

I had a very happy birthday. It was very good of you to send me that book of fairy tales. I have read three stories already.

Affectionately yours,

.....

My dear Miss Brown,

I have been very sick for the last month, and the doctor says I cannot go back to school for quite a while. I am very lonely sometimes. Will you please send me the names of some good books? I should like something like "Little Women".

Your affectionate pupil,

.....

Dear Aunt,

Our teacher has just taught us to write a letter. I shall write one to you every week. We have learned the first verse of "America". I know every word of it. Would you like to see how well I can write it?

Your loving niece,

.....

Dear Frank,

John told us this morning that you are in bed with a heavy cold. I am very sorry. I hope the doctor is not making you take medicine. I hate to take medicine. We began a new story in class yesterday. The name is "The Blue Bird". Perhaps your mother will get it and read it to you. I know you will like it.

Your friend,

.....

#### 4. TESTING ACCURACY AND KNOWLEDGE OF FORM BY DICTATION, COPYING, AND THE SHORT REPRODUCTION.

In the grades below the fourth, copying and dictation serve a useful purpose as aids in introducing new lines of work to children, and they are to some extent useful in a similar way in this grade. This is particularly true in teaching the letter form, which, so far as its arrangement upon paper goes, is a purely mechanical matter.

Generally, however, copying and dictation are more valuable for *testing* than for teaching. They should be used with moderation, and they should be used right. Children at the end of the fourth grade should be able to write from dictation at the rate of about eleven words (averaging  $3\frac{1}{2}$  letters a word) a minute. This is according to the standard devised by Mr. S. A. Courtis. Dictation that is too slow is as bad as dictation that is too fast.

Reproduction differs only slightly from dictation and is mainly useful for testing a pupil's mastery in the mechanics. There is some originality involved, but memory is the chief factor. Only very short stories or incidents, with interest and point to them, should be used. It is an exercise to be used sparingly.

### III. Topics for Original Paragraphs.

These topics are given here only to suggest the *kind* of topic that children are more likely to succeed with in their paragraph writing. Teachers do not have to use these particular ones. But they must be sure to select subjects that are *concrete, personal, and brief*.

The Best Coast in Lawrence.  
My Ride on a Roller Coaster.  
My First Swimming Lesson.  
How I Taught a Trick to My Dog.  
How to Spin a Top.  
Rabbit Ways.  
Fun at ..... Beach.  
A Tree Mishap.

What I Like About the ..... School.  
Taking Home My Monthly Report Card.  
The Game I Like Best for Indoors Recess.  
How We Make a Sewing Apron.  
A Picture in My School Room.  
Why I Was Late for School.  
How I Help My Teacher.

A Summer Morning at the Playground on the Common.  
A Walk Along the Banks of the Merrimack.  
A Trip to Den Rock.  
A Trip to the Polls on Election Day.  
A Trip to the Pumping Station.  
How Lawrence Looks from the Water Tower.  
The Merrimack Falls in Winter.  
The View from the Canoe Club.  
The Flower Beds on the Common.  
Cheated at the Circus.  
Keeping Track of Johnny at the Picnic.  
What I Liked Best at the Pet Shop.

The Baby at Our House.  
The Kind of Dog I Like.  
The Best Time I Ever Had.  
The Story I Like Best.  
Spending a Nickel.  
My Fall on the Ice.  
How We Surprised Mother.  
When the Fire Alarm Rings.  
My Home in Italy.  
On the Steamer From Hamburg.  
What I Saw on My Way to School.  
What I Did on Saturday.  
What I Am Going to be.  
A Fireman I Know.  
A Fire I Saw.  
Lawrence's Prettiest Street.  
In the Forest With Hiawatha.  
What "Safety First" Means.  
How to Build a Fire.  
How I Would Direct a Stranger to the Public Library.  
What I Liked Best in the Circus Parade.

#### IV. Technicalities.

There are very few written technicalities required in this course of study. Those that are required should be thoroughly taught, and plenty of opportunity given to use them in writing.

1. *Capitals.* Beginning names of holidays, of local geographical names (Tower Hill). First word of every line of poetry.
2. *Punctuation marks* used in the writing of dates, letter headings, etc.
3. *Abbreviations.* Those used in letter writing.
4. *Contractions.* Isn't, didn't, wasn't, I've, won't, can't, wouldn't and others occurring in common use.
5. *Letter form.* Arrangement on paper; indentation of first line.

## V. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

(Review words are printed *in italics*.)

<i>all right</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>shining</i>
<i>afraid</i>	<i>forty</i>	<i>their</i>
<i>almost</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>there</i>
<i>already</i>	<i>guess</i>	<i>they</i>
<i>always</i>	<i>having</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>beginning</i>	<i>heard</i>	<i>tried</i>
<i>busy</i>	<i>laughed</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>color</i>	<i>lose</i>	<i>until</i>
<i>clothes</i>	<i>much</i>	<i>using</i>
<i>coming</i>	<i>people</i>	<i>which</i>
<i>doctor</i>	<i>quiet</i>	<i>whose</i>
<i>dropped</i>	<i>quite</i>	<i>women</i>
<i>early</i>	<i>Saturday</i>	<i>writing</i>
<i>enough</i>		
<i>aloud</i>	<i>honest</i>	<i>ready</i>
<i>also</i>	<i>hoping</i>	<i>really</i>
<i>among</i>	<i>hour</i>	<i>receive</i>
<i>because</i>	<i>instead</i>	<i>rough</i>
<i>becoming</i>	<i>just</i>	<i>spoonful</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>learned</i>	<i>stopped</i>
<i>bicycle</i>	<i>losing</i>	<i>straight</i>
<i>built</i>	<i>meant</i>	<i>tired</i>
<i>business</i>	<i>minute</i>	<i>touched</i>
<i>carriage</i>	<i>ninety</i>	<i>through</i>
<i>caught</i>	<i>often</i>	<i>used to</i>
<i>choose</i>	<i>perhaps</i>	<i>weather</i>
<i>early</i>	<i>pieces</i>	<i>wholly</i>
<i>easily</i>	<i>pleasant</i>	<i>written</i>
<i>fourth</i>	<i>quietly</i>	<i>wrong</i>



## VI. Comments and Cautions.

To teach one thing for which the pupil is ever after responsible, then another thing plus the first, then a third, plus the first and second, is the surest way of getting somewhere.

It is very important that the pupil read his composition through before handing it in. By this means he will discover many common errors, such as omissions of words, misspelled words, incorrect punctuation, and the repetition of the same word. He should be taught to cultivate the power of imagining how it will sound when read aloud.

The fourth grade teacher should begin to transfer the burden of criticism from her own shoulders to those of her pupils. But the criticism of one another's work by the pupils must always be controlled and directed by the teacher. Children must be made to understand

- (1) That criticism deals with merits as well as faults.
- (2) That criticism of one another's work should always be given to *help* one another.
- (3) That the pupil must regard his fellow-critics as his friends, not his enemies.

In all oral and written composition, the blackboard is most useful. By means of it the oral expression is visualized, making pleasing features more emphatic, while faulty ones are recorded, to be changed again and again until satisfactory.

The co-operative work of teacher and pupil is made more impressive if the blackboard is brought into use in working out improvement in the sequence of thought, the sentence structure, and the choice of words. The teacher may copy upon it compositions which are to be criticised by the class; or she may use it for presenting a model composition for the pupils to follow in their own oral or written constructions.

One of the best ways to interest and to improve a class, particularly the poorly equipped or the indifferent members, is to have pupils write their own compositions on the board, in-

stead of on paper. This method can be used with great profit in a grade as low as the third, and is increasingly valuable in higher grades. Here the writer is certain of an audience, and equally certain of an immediate estimate of his effort. He desires the appreciation of this audience, and wishes to avoid any unfavorable criticism from it. Therefore, it is natural for him to look over his work, correcting his own blunders before reading it aloud to the class for their comments. Such exercises are certain to develop the appreciation of the difference between orderly presentation of events and aimless wandering, to deepen the feeling for correct structure, and the knowledge of the right use of the capitals and the elementary punctuation marks.

## VII. Written Standards.

At the end of the year, a fourth grade pupil of average ability ought to be able without oral preparation or other assistance from the teacher, to write a paragraph as good as the one here printed. Some pupils will be found able to write a much better one. A few will not be able to write as well as the example calls for. But at least seventy-five percent. of the class ought to be able to reach the standard of ability represented by it.

### My Flower Bed.

I made my first flower garden last June. One day some boys ran across the bed, and stepped on one of my plants. The next day a dog scratched up some more. So I put a fence around what was left. After that the flowers had a chance to grow.

## FIFTH GRADE.

### ORAL.

*(Two-thirds of the language time in the fifth grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

By the time children have reached the fifth grade the following things should have become "bred in the bone":

- (1) That it is a desirable thing to be able to speak good English.
- (2) That one should speak slowly and distinctly and with sufficient "carry" to the voice to make oneself heard in all parts of the class room.
- (3) That while talking one should stand erect and away from the desk.
- (4) That the short sentence is better suited to the majority of young speakers than the long sentence.
- (5) That a pupil in his talking, just as in his writing, should learn to pick out some one particular point in a given subject and stick to it.

During the fifth year keep the following points constantly before the pupil. They will help a great deal.

Stand up straight.

Speak distinctly.

Watch your English.

Use short sentences.

Stick to the point.

Make it interesting.

Arouse the conscience of your pupils toward clean-cut enunciation by giving frequent drills like those suggested in the Appendix. It does not make much difference what drills are used, or what words are practiced upon. The value of such drills lies in the suggestion which work of this sort sets going

in the pupil's mind. Poor enunciation is, for the most part, a matter of ignorance. Children don't know any better. They speak as they hear others around them speak. When it isn't due to ignorance, it is due to laziness. Some children and many grown people who know better are too lazy to enunciate their words clearly. It is too much bother. Most children, though, if taken early enough and shown the difference between distinct utterance and the slouchy manner of speech which so many of them, boys particularly, are prone to adopt, will respond to the teacher's efforts to set up for her class a high standard of enunciation. It is not enough, however, for teachers to *talk* about good enunciation. The only way for children to learn to enunciate clearly is to have plenty of practice in clear enunciation. This is where the drill is useful—not because of the particular sounds the drill contains, but because it often awakens in children their first realization of what slipshod habits of enunciation they have grown into without knowing it. If children could learn no more than to sound their final consonants, their whole speech would be transformed. This much, at least, should be achieved in the fifth grade.

## II. Examples of Oral Composition.

These examples suggest something of the style of oral composition to be aimed for in the fifth grade. They show some advance over the selections representing fourth grade oral composition, but are still simple and childlike. Because the power of children to talk is usually several years ahead of their ability to write, the use of the longer sentence is perfectly natural to many children in this grade and should not be discouraged except in the case of those who do not use it well. By the longer sentence is not meant a series of statements strung together by "and". The kind that is perfectly allowable is the kind that appears in the examples below. Oblige children who are careless in their sentence structure to talk in simple sentences until you can trust them to express themselves in larger units.

There is no dearth of material for oral composition. Some

of this material was suggested in the third grade outline. The subjects for written composition make perfectly good subjects for oral composition. The range is as wide as the interests and the experiences of the children. They must be shown, however, how to handle their simple themes in such a way as to make them interesting to those who listen to them. This is not an easy thing to do, but it affords opportunity for the best kind of training. The chief thing to impress upon children is that they must not talk about a string of things in their oral compositions, but that they must select some single point, and, as it were, "elaborate" it. The examples which follow show commendable intent to do this very thing. They were taken from the actual work of fifth grade children.

#### My Pet Bird.

I have a little bird named Dick. When I open the door of his cage he flies out about the room. He eats from my hands. If my mother does not put water in his dish he sits in it and keeps chirping till she pays attention to him. Then she puts the water in, and he takes his bath. After he is all dry, and has fixed his feathers, he begins to sing, and makes the morning bright.

#### My Guinea Hens.

We have two guinea hens. Their names are Jack and Jill. Jack has a white breast and the rest of him is black and white. Jill has white wings, and her body is gray and white. These guinea hens' combs are different from hens' combs. They are very hard, and hurt your hand to touch them. Jill is very nervous, but Jack is very brave. If he sees his sister in trouble he will run to help her. We keep these guinea hens, because if anyone should come to steal the hens, the guinea hens would set up a loud racket. They also scare hawks.

#### How I Help At Home.

One day when I was tired of playing with my dolls, I asked my mother if I could help her. She said I might wash and iron my hair ribbons. I put the irons on the stove, and washed the ribbons. While I was ironing them, the iron fell from the holder onto the rug and burned it. I was afraid to pick it up, so my mother had to leave her work and do it for me. The first ribbon I ironed I scorched, because the iron was too hot. The next I scorched also. My mother then did the rest. She said I was more bother than help.

### III. Common Errors of Speech.

The errors listed for correction in the fifth grade are practically the same as those assigned to the grades below. The kinds of errors common to the speech of children are few in number. But unfortunately they persist from infancy to old age. It is not possible to assign certain errors to certain grades, and let it go at that. The same old errors must be attacked all along the line.

The grouping into: (1) verb errors, (2) pronoun errors, (3) colloquialisms, and (4) mispronunciations has no significance beyond serving to remind the teacher (see Chapter on "Common Errors of Speech" in the Appendix) that verb errors form the largest proportion of spoken errors, with the other three groups of errors following in order of frequency. That chapter in the Appendix should be studied carefully by the teacher who desires to make an effectual campaign against these errors. She should on no account be led into the mistake of discussing with her pupils this technical classification of errors, or the worse mistake of discussing in this grade the grammatical principles violated in these errors. The study of grammar does not begin until the seventh grade, and it is not to be brought into any earlier grade, no matter in what innocent disguise. Grammar never caused any child to speak correct English. There is only one way to teach right forms, and that is to have children say them often enough to make the right form sound right.

Our piano is broke.  
He hadn't ought to go.  
You was'nt on the corner.  
I come to Lawrence last week.  
I've wrote my spelling long ago.  
She is laying down.

He done it.  
It ain't no use.  
He seen more than you did.  
He don't know his lesson.  
Has the bell rang?

Them words are too hard.  
Me and you will go.

I can write better than him.

I can copy it off the board.  
They learn you to cook at that school.  
Take your place in back of him.  
My mother took sick.  
It won't hurt nothin'.  
I brought it home to my mother.

He was to his house.  
She reads good.  
They left him go.  
Look where you're at.  
The answer what you got is right.

The candy is et up.  
They was a new book here.  
Her ran ahead a'me.  
Look at 'em!

Wait till I git me cap.  
Watch me ketch it!  
May I borry a knife?

#### IV. Comments and Cautions.

It is quite remarkable to find how few complete sentences, each containing subject, predicate, and suitable modifiers, are exchanged between the ordinary teacher and her pupils. Presumably in every school directions, questions, and explanations, are given; yet if teachers were to review their own language, they would probably be astonished to find how few sentences composed of well-chosen words they speak in a day. A sustained conversation between teacher and pupils is very unusual, frequently an unheard-of thing. Questions that are asked are generally elliptical in form, often they are expressed in single words, while the answers are very generally sent back by the children in single words or phrases, not infrequently by the monosyllables "yes" and "no".

The shorthand report of eighteen recitations in a New York school showed that out of 750 answers to the teachers' questions 420 were *one word* answers, and 100 more were phrase answers. What about the answers in *your* room?

Insist that when the child talks he stand erect *and free from his desk* and that whenever practicable he face the persons to whom he talks, as in ordinary conversation. This physical control of his body will, when it becomes a habit, help him to control his thinking and his talking.

Teach children the habit of dropping the voice at periods.



Correct oral English may be realized in the language lesson only to be lost in the other periods of the daily program, unless the teacher carefully guards against any lapses by her pupils from the correct form until such time as right habits of expression impel them to use the correct forms without any conscious effort on their part. Pupils should learn that during the entire school day their statements should be grammatical and complete. The teacher should seldom supply part of the pupil's answer or statement.

The daily training in speaking before the class will in time enable the child to express his thoughts in the presence of others without nervous fear or a feeling of embarrassment. The results at first will often seem crude and unsatisfactory to the mature mind of the teacher; but if finally the child acquires a composed, pleasing, and forcible manner of speaking, the end is well worth the effort. If the issue is only self-control and self-poise the time spent in the acquirement of these is time well expended.

At the close of every recitation, or at least once a day, serious mistakes in English should be definitely and forcibly corrected. If this is done in a mechanical way, in the same manner day after day, little will be accomplished. On the other hand, if the work is carried on with spirit and intelligence, much may be done for the pupil's English.

## WRITTEN.

*(One-third of the language time in the fifth grade is given to written work.)*

### I. Aims.

The aim of the fifth grade written work is to extend and strengthen the lines of work laid down in the previous grade

*Sentence work* should still be restricted to the simple form of the sentence, except in the case of individuals who naturally write the longer sentence well. Those who do not should be

pinned down to the short sentence until they show themselves able to use the larger freedom judiciously. Below the seventh grade the child who has not natural language gifts loses himself in a complex or a compound sentence. All we need to get in the grammar school is clear and complete sentences, properly capitalized and punctuated. We cannot expect to get ease and grace. Those who go to the high school will get there all the style they want. Those who do not go to the high school will not need much English style to meet their writing needs in life. If any of them should later discover the need of style they will get it for themselves.

*The original paragraph work* should show some increase in length, and the beginnings of skill in the art of elaborating, so to speak, the simple themes upon which the pupils write. The first thing to learn in this art is to focus the thought upon some *single phase* of the theme selected and make the whole paragraph turn upon that. This is not an easy art to acquire, and it cannot be acquired in a single year. The fifth grade teacher must, however, make a beginning at it. The lack of training in this respect is very noticeable in children's written themes. They write a dozen different things in a single paragraph, and consequently write nothing interesting about any one of the dozen things. The subject of "How I Help at Home" becomes a catalogue of duties from building the fire in the morning to washing the dishes after supper. Now, starting the fire in the morning is a theme full of possibilities for a composition paragraph, and washing the supper dishes is a theme not without opportunities for interesting (and possibly humorous) comment. Yet the great majority of children's compositions are of the catalogue type rather than of the selective type. Fifth grade children are capable of grasping this "single phase" thought, and of working it out little by little in their themes, if they have the right kind of help and suggestion from the teacher. Nothing is more helpful in this direction than the presentation by the teacher of many model paragraphs illustrating how the elaboration of a single idea is carried out by a master hand. Much can be done toward this end in the oral composition work. Indeed, it is here that the foundation of

written work is laid. If an oral composition is allowed to ramble over a variety of things, touching none of them interestingly, the written paragraphs will be no better in this respect. The same process holds good for both oral and written themes: Choose a subject that is concrete, personal, and brief. Then *narrow* it by selecting some single phase of the subject which gives most promise to yield the maximum of interest or entertainment or instruction. Then have the pupil work this up for all he is worth.

*The letter* should form an important part of the written work. The standard form printed in an Appendix should be the unvarying standard in all grades. Follow the pattern of the model letters given for the fourth grade. These may be lengthened slightly, but should not be more than one paragraph in length. They should be of an informal, intimate type, simple, sincere, and jolly—such as real children would write to one another or to grown people of whom they are fond. Insist, however, that the form of the letter be strictly like the standard.

*Dictation, copying, and reproduction* exercises should be occasionally used. But these, it must be remembered, are of chief value as *testing* exercises, not as *teaching* exercises. They should never be given unless there's a reason. Fifth grade children should write dictation at the rate of about 16 ordinary words a minute. Copying is a good test of attention and accuracy, but care must be taken that *right habits* of copying are taught. If wrong habits are taught, it is a harm rather than a help. Copying should always be timed. It is impossible otherwise to measure the power of the different pupils. Once this power is known by actual testing, only those who are found to be slow and inaccurate should be given further practice. The others would be better occupied in other kinds of language work. Do not give much reproduction work. Its value is about on a par with dictation. It contains a slight element of originality, but its chief value is in testing mechanics of writing. It should be sparingly used.

In the mastery of the *mechanics* and in the power to criticize their own work fifth graders should show steady growth.

## II. Lines of Work.

1. Sentences.
2. Original paragraphs.
3. Letters.
4. Testing Accuracy and Knowledge of Form by Dictation, Copying, and the Short Reproduction.

## III. Topics for Original Paragraphs.

The First Coast of the Winter.  
How We Made a Snow Lady.  
Playing School with My Dolls.  
Our Neighborhood Circus.  
An Afternoon at Canobie Lake.  
An Automobile Ride to Lowell.  
Coasting on Cold Spring Hill.  
A Hot Afternoon at the Wading Pool.  
Swimming Excitement.

Our School Lawn.  
The School Yard at Recess.  
Our Christmas Entertainment.  
The Boy (Girl) in Front of Me.  
Listening for the "No Session" Bell.  
Filing Out at 11:15.  
How to Use the School Telephone.  
How to Keep a Neat Desk.  
My First Day in School After a Month's Absence.

A Horse Race at Rockingham Fair.  
The Common in Winter (Summer).  
The Shattuck Flagstaff.  
The Water Tower.  
Along Essex Street on a Wet Day.  
My Grandfather's Barn.  
Our Garden After the First Frost.  
Helping in My Father's Shop.  
The Best Exhibit in Our Church Fair.  
The Spicket (Merrimack, Shawsheen) River.  
Packing the Lunch Basket for a Day at Canobie.  
A Visit to the Engine House at 7:45 p. m.

My Lucky Day.  
The Gypsies at Cold Spring.  
Fun at the Street Fountain.  
The Boy Choir.  
What I Saw When Carrying Dinners.  
A Frightened Animal at the Circus Parade.  
Picking Shells at Salisbury.  
Burning the Leaves.  
A Ride With the Grocer.  
Cleaning My Yard.  
The Street I Live on.  
A Picture in Our House.  
Why I'd Like to be a Letter Carrier.  
Why I Favor a Central Bridge.  
How I Help to Keep the City Clean.  
How I Care for Our Horse.  
How I Help at Home on Saturday.  
What I am Going to do for Christmas.  
How to Entertain a Number of Small Children on a Rainy Afternoon.  
How to Make a Whirligig.  
A Man I Would Like to Have for an Uncle.

#### IV. Technicalities.

The technicalities in this course are purposely kept few and simple. Teachers are not to teach anything that is not here indicated. Many of the "old favorites", like the "comma in a series" and the comma after the name of a person addressed, have been intentionally omitted. You will notice, also, that quotation marks have not yet appeared.

If children use direct quotation in their written work, and leave out the marks, or use them wrong, don't worry about it. Let it pass unnoticed. There are many more important things to worry about. Quotation marks will be taught later on in the course, but only a very little time will be spent upon them. The use of quotation marks in the kind of writing that our boys and girls will be called upon to do after they leave school is very rare. It is an unimportant item upon which the school has been wasting much precious time. Teach thoroughly the few things you are told to teach, and leave the rest to somebody else.

1. *Capitals.* Titles of compositions; addressing envelopes.
2. *Punctuation marks* required in letter forms, including the address on the envelope.
3. *Apostrophe* in possessive singular.

## V. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

(Review words are printed *in italics*.)

*all right*  
*all ready*  
*beginning*  
*believe*  
*busy*  
*business*  
*carriage*  
*caught*  
*color*  
*coming*  
*dropped*

*easily*  
*enough*  
*friend*  
*heard*  
*know*  
*laughed*  
*minute*  
*people*  
*quiet*  
*receive*  
*studied*

*their*  
*there*  
*tired*  
*too*  
*truly*  
*until*  
*weather*  
*women*  
*written*

answered  
cities  
cousin  
cotton  
different  
drawer  
either

except  
handkerchief  
neighbor  
oblige  
pleasant  
replied  
straight

trouble  
umbrella  
useful  
village  
whom  
woolen

## VI. Comments and Cautions.

Pupils should continue the habit of criticizing and correcting their own written work before handing it in. What they can do for themselves the teacher should not do for them.

Select two or three special points that you wish to impress, and examine the papers rapidly, with those points alone in view. Concentrate your efforts on those points for a time, then select other points and transfer the emphasis of your attention to them. The papers can be examined more easily and rapidly and, therefore, the exercises may be given more frequently when but few points are in mind.

It is a good plan to have on the board or on the child's desk a list of points on which he needs to exercise care, such as spelling, capitals, periods, commas, grammar, etc. Let him look at this list before he begins, and correct his work according to it when he is through. The list can be varied to suit the special needs of each grade, or a list can be made for each

child that will suggest his personal difficulties. Insist on each pupil doing his best in every exercise, and refuse to accept careless work. Hand such work back, without correction, and require the pupil to do it again.

## VII. Written Standards.

The following paragraph was selected to represent the composition ability that it seems reasonable to expect from the child of average power at the end of his fifth year. It is not an easy thing to select from children's compositions of each grade a single paragraph that shall indicate the desired amount of growth from year to year. While the standard paragraphs used in this course of study have not been graded according to any scientific scale, each has been chosen after careful deliberation. Considering the fact that the schools have hitherto had no standards of any kind in oral or written composition, it would hardly be sensible to be over-finical in this first attempt to establish some. It is believed that they are adequate for the purpose of indicating to teachers in a concrete way the sort of original composition the general run of fifth grade children should be capable of turning off at the end of the year. There will be found in every class, of course, a wide variation of this ability. For some the standard will be too low. A few may not be quite able to reach it. But so long as seventy-five percent. of the pupils can write an original paragraph as good as the example here presented, the teacher will have done her share of the work in written language.

### Flying a Kite.

I have one of those kites that you get at Morehouse's. Last evening my brother and I went out on the Extension to fly it. There was a splendid breeze blowing. The kite flew as high as the telephone pole. It would have gone higher if the string had been longer. I am going to buy another ball of twine, and try it again this afternoon. So if you see a kite away up in the sky you will know it is mine.



## SIXTH GRADE.

### ORAL.

*(Two-thirds of the language time of the sixth grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

The aim of the sixth year should be to accustom children, by much practice, to talk freely upon their feet and to be careful of their English and clear in their utterance. This carefulness in their speech should characterize all their recitations. The habit of good oral expression can never be established through the medium of the language period alone. Effort must be constant through the whole day's work.

It is a good idea to have occasionally some short recitations or declamations of a simple character.

Things for the pupil to remember:

Know what you want to say.  
Say it in your own words.  
Say it *to* some one.  
Say it as well as you know how.

Things for the teacher to remember:

Make everybody talk.  
Don't criticise *too* much.  
Make corrections stick.  
Make the class profit as well as the pupil talking.

Work constantly for the improvement of the enunciation of your pupils and the development of a speaking voice that without forcing or the use of an unnatural register can be heard easily all over the room. Have frequent drills in articulation like those suggested in the Appendix to this Course of Study. Strive to get clear enunciation in all recitations. It is of little

use to work for ten or fifteen minutes a week on enunciation drills, and accept mumbling and half audible talk from pupils during the rest of the time. The teacher who goes in for clean-cut enunciation will get it. We fail to get a good many things from our pupils because we are not earnest enough in our effort to get them. It is not to be expected, of course, that children to whom English is an acquired language will speak as perfectly, so far as enunciation goes, as native born children. That difficulty is always to be taken into consideration in judging the results of a teacher's work in oral language. No sixth grade class in Lawrence, however, is made up exclusively of children of non-English-speaking parents; so that there are always children enough in every room whose speech may be taken, in all fairness, as samples of the persistence and success of the teacher's efforts to secure distinct enunciation.

## II. Examples of Oral Composition.

The following paragraphs represent a reasonable standard for sixth grade oral compositions. Please note carefully what was said in connection with oral composition in the fourth and fifth grades. The sixth grade work in oral composition is but a continuation of the work there discussed in considerable detail. Be especially alert to the need of training children to select a *single phase* of a subject and make the most of it they can in a single paragraph, instead of spreading themselves out thin over all the things that may occur to them to say upon the subject. For instance, take these two themes:

### How I Help My Mother.

Every day when I get up in the morning I eat my breakfast. I wash the dishes, do the beds, and sweep the floor. Then I get ready to go to school. In the afternoon I just wash the dishes, and my sister sweeps the floor. When I come home from school, I do all the errands. Later I go out to play. When it is five o'clock I go home and stay home. At six o'clock we have supper. When we are all over with supper, I gather the dishes from the table. When I am done, I start to wash the dishes. When I have finished I say my prayers and go to bed.

### How I Help My Mother.

My share of the housework is washing the dishes. There are six of us at home. So you see we have a great many dishes to wash. I have never tried to reckon it, but I am sure I wash a million in a year. My sister wipes them, and we both wish we lived in the times when people ate out of the same dish with their fingers. We play this game to keep up our courage. We try to do them quicker every week. Last week we gained four minutes. We didn't break any dishes either.

These were taken from actual compositions of school children. The first is a schedule of a day of housework, upon no detail of which the author dwelt long enough to arouse our interest or to put anything of herself into her experience. It is mechanically correct, and that is all. The author of the other paragraph chose a single item of the day's work and worked into it considerable interesting detail and genuine childlike comment. It is this treatment of the paragraph that the sixth grade should strive for. It is not to be expected that every pupil in a class will be able to produce a paragraph that will be as interestingly worked out as the second example above. But all should work for it and a fair proportion of the class should really get it.

### Polly's Antics.

On rainy afternoons I play with my poll parrot. His greatest delight is to play with a spoon. He slips it back and forth through a ring on his cage. Sometimes it drops on the floor. Then it is fun to see him run to get it as fast as his stubby little legs will carry him. If a piece of cracker is put into his cage, lickety-cut he goes in after it. A poll parrot is a very comical creature.

### Fun at the Camp.

Last vacation my father said I could invite four boys up to our camp at Corbett's Pond. We lived in a tent, and slept out, and got our own meals. We went fishing and hunting, but had the most fun in swimming. While we were in the water, we played ball and had races. In the races I always came out fifth.

### The Christmas Tree on the Common.

At Christmas time there was a large tree on the Common. It was illuminated with electric lights. On the top, there was a revolving light which lit up almost the whole Common. The tree was covered with all kinds of ornaments for Christmas. Near by was a large sign, on which were the words "Peace on earth, good will to men".

### III. Errors of Speech.

The use of correct English is a habit. This thought has been emphasized over and over again in this course of study. The speech of children and of grown people is full of errors because they have not *formed the habit* of talking correctly. There is a big difference between knowing *how* to do a thing and *doing* it. It is not mere *knowledge*, but *habit* that we want. Pupils may *know* the right form and out of two forms presented to them by the teacher, one right and one wrong, invariably name the right form. Yet in the very next recitation they will use the very form which they condemned a moment before. Every teacher has probably heard the old story of Johnny and the past participle of the verb "to go"; how the teacher punished him for repeated offences by requiring him to stay after school and write "I have gone" fifty times; how upon the completion of the task (in the absence of his teacher from the room) he wrote at the bottom of his paper: "Dear Miss . . . . ., I have wrote "I have gone" 50 times and I have went home." Habits of years cannot be rooted up in a minute. To get a habit thoroughly rooted in a child's life takes careful drill and constant repetition. The errors of speech cannot be corrected by *writing* the correct form. It must be said and heard over and over again, until the ear becomes accustomed to it and accepts it in place of the wrong form which it had before accepted as the right one.

The school has to fight perpetually the language habits of the street, and children are in school less than half of every year. But it is not fair to measure the power of the school to overcome bad language environment out of school by comparing the length of time spent in school with that spent upon the street. By reason of its opportunity to rivet attention and create vivid impressions, an hour in school, if used to the fullest extent, far outweighs an hour upon the street. Everybody knows the miracles the school performs upon the little foreign children who enter it. But miracles are not wrought incidentally. Children cannot be taught to forsake bad habits by occasionally correcting their use of *ain'ts* and *wa'n'ts*. The

effort must be organized, regular, and persistent. The errors, after all, are not many, and it is wonderful how the avoidance of a few of them affects our opinion of a person's education. The knowledge of a dozen forms of correct expression will give a person an appearance of being well educated, even though his schooling was very limited. The man who never says *ain't* almost qualifies as an educated man.

Excellent material for drill for upper grades may be found in "Applied English Grammar", a text-book written a dozen years ago by Edwin H. Lewis, published by the Macmillan Company, and in a new book, "Language Games for All Grades", by Miss Alhambra G. Deming of Winona, Minn., published by the Beckley-Cardy Company of Chicago.

The ice had broke.  
The picture is tore.  
I seen him when he done it.  
I come to school early this morning.  
There was two new boys in the yard.

He done his work first.  
You wasn't there.  
'Taint no good.  
She don't want them.

Hand me them books.

Who is going, you or me?  
It was me that lent the book.

John took my knife off me.  
She's just after coming.  
My teacher learned me to write.  
It sort of makes you afraid.  
Leave me see.  
I have a book what has no cover.  
Mary talked like he did.  
Can I speak to her?

Here, look't.  
He was to church.  
It went fine.  
Where are you at?  
We won't have no school to-day.  
I hat ter go home.  
The water pipe is all froze up.

What are you doin'?  
Are they any school?  
I'm a thinkin' a goin' to-night.  
Gimme a book.

Kin' you ketch the ball?  
Give it to 'em!  
My mudder gave me the book.

#### IV. Comments and Cautions.

Remember that those who talk well will write well. Writers may not be speakers, but really good speakers can always write.

The teacher must insist that the pupil give her only his best English in all recitations, and that clear expression become more and more general as the year advances.

In a recent survey of classroom teaching in the city of New York, short-hand reports of eighteen recitations showed that all the pupils together used about 5000 words, while their teachers used about 19000 words. Who does the most talking in *your* room?

Helpful criticisms by the pupils should be encouraged, but aimless, trite remarks such as "I liked what you said" and "I think you had a good choice of words" should be discouraged. Impress upon the pupils that only such criticism should be offered as will call attention to an excellence, or enable the one who is speaking to do better in his next effort. Avoid also the danger of allowing the criticism to stop with minor corrections and evident slips.

Pupils, also, should be taught by degrees to make definite, systematic, and kindly suggestions on both the matter presented by the pupil talking and his manner of presenting it, and should be led to discover what the secret is of the effectiveness of the pupils who talk well.

## WRITTEN.

*(One-third of the language time of the sixth grade is given to written work.)*

### I. Aims.

At the end of the sixth year children should be able:

- (1) To express in a short paragraph, clearly and with some sense of order, such ideas as are entirely familiar to them.
- (2) To use sentences grammatically complete, correctly begun and ended.

- (3) To write and mail a simple letter to a friend, or a brief business letter, using the standard forms adopted in this course of study.
- (4) To spell correctly the words which they commonly write, and upon which they have been specially drilled.
- (5) To know how to use the few technicalities taught.
- (6) To criticize intelligently their own work, and correct their own errors.

The facility and the accuracy called for by the above standards of ability are not, of course, expected to be the same in degree as the facility and accuracy expected at the end of the eighth grade. They are the same in kind, but in a more limited field. It is difficult to define accurately just what that field is, and it is possible to over-rate the ability of twelve-year-old children. The things that are called for here they must be able to do *by themselves*, without any help or cautioning from the teacher. Often the quality of work done by children when wholly unassisted is disappointing to teachers, because the constant "boosting" they give children in the every day recitation misleads teachers as to the real power that pupils themselves possess and which they can draw upon unaided. Sixth grade children should, however, at the end of the year show considerable mastery of simple language facts and know how to use them accurately. It is assumed that in the process by which this mastery has been gained there will have been simultaneously developed some useful language habits and tendencies. Some of these are:

- (1) The *tendency* to select a subject for original composition that can be interestingly developed in a single paragraph.
- (2) The *tendency* to think over the subject and to do some little mental arrangement of ideas.
- (3) The *tendency* to avoid too much repetition of the same words and the same sentence form.
- (4) The *habit* of neatness in writing the composition.
- (5) The *habit* of looking over all written work to correct mistakes.



The sentences should still be kept simple. At the same time pupils who show themselves capable of using complex and compound sentences in their written paragraphs without getting snarled up in them should be allowed considerable liberty in this respect. The teacher must remember, however, that the longer a child allows a sentence to run, the greater the danger that it will run away with him. Just as soon, then, as a pupil shows by his careless handling of the long sentence that he is enjoying more liberty than is good for him, he should be brought back to the starting line.

It would be a waste of time to attempt to get all of the pupils in this grade, or even a majority of them, to use the longer sentence. It is not worth while to work for it in this grade. Even if it could be successfully done, it would be done at too great an expense. There are other things more important at this stage. If your class leaves the sixth grade able to write good short sentences, invariably begun with a capital letter and ended with a period or whatever other closing mark is required, you may thank your stars. Have no regrets that the course did not permit you to teach a maturer style. You have given them the thing most needful. If they remain in school, they will get later on what you perhaps would like to give them now. If they leave school early to go to work, you have given them the best possible thing—the habit of writing short, simple, clear, and correct sentences.

The one step in advance which the sixth grade teacher may take, with respect to sentence structure, is to train her pupils to use a greater variety of ways of beginning their sentences. They should be taught to avoid repetition of the same word or phrase. They may be also taught to practice some of the simpler principles of inversion, so as to make the important things in the sentence come first, or last. The conventional order of subject, verb, and object in the sentence tends toward monotony. If this stereotyped order can be varied occasionally, the monotony of a succession of short sentences will be relieved and the whole effect of the sentence structure improved. It is not expected that all the pupils will develop much skill in this kind of work if it is attempted; but it is

better to spend effort upon improving the simple sentence than to try to get all the children to use complex and compound sentences, which is more than can be expected of sixth grade children.

In the sixth grade the friendly letter is to continue an important feature of the written work, and the *business letter* is to be introduced. The standard form for the business letter is printed in an Appendix. This, like the form of the friendly letter, is the one adopted by the Bureau of Measurement and Efficiency of the Boston public schools. The body of the business letter should be confined to a few sentences. The chief thing to teach is the form. The friendly letter ought to show some growth in interest and ease, in proportion as the children gain in the power to elaborate a single theme interestingly in their own original paragraph work.

## II. Lines of work.

- (1) Sentences.
- (2) Paragraphs.
- (3) Friendly Letters.
- (4) Business Letters.
- (5) Teaching letter forms, mechanics, and accuracy by occasional exercises in dictation, copying, and short reproduction.  
(Sixth grade children should write from dictation at the rate of about 19 words a minute, according to the Courtis scale.)

## III. Topics for Original Paragraphs.

Study the suggestions given for the fourth and fifth grades, under both oral and written composition.

My New Flexible.  
Coasting Down Providence Street.  
Fishing Through the Ice at Valpey's.  
A Potato Roast.  
The Merrimack at 4.30 When Skating is Good.  
The Fun a Bicycle Brings.  
A Hallowe'en Scare.

The ..... School Team.  
Our New Victrola.  
Doing Palmer Writing.  
The Snow Rally at Recess.  
Our Slide on the Common.  
Why I Had to Stay after School.  
Why I Like the Reading Period.  
Why I Like Our Sewing Lesson.  
The Song I Like Best.  
How I Explained My Tardiness to the Principal.  
If I Were Teacher.

My Visit to the Iron Foundry.  
A Visit to the General Hospital.  
How the Lawrence Filter Works.  
The Sanitary Milk Station.  
Essex Street on the Night Before Christmas.  
The Transfer Station at 5:30 p. m.  
What the Ayer Mill Clock Sees.  
A Hot Sunday Afternoon on the Common.  
The Best Exhibit at Rockingham Fair.  
At the Tribune Office at 4 p. m.

The Scarecrow.  
When Mother Goes Away.  
Getting up on a "Zero" Morning.  
"Clean up" Week in Lawrence.  
The Song of the Looms.  
It Happened on the Belt Line Car.  
The Rainbow in the Merrimack Falls.  
Our Program on the Afternoon Before April 19.  
If I Had My Own Way.  
The Busy English Sparrow.  
How to Procure a Public Library Card.  
How I Made My Garden.  
How We Earned Our Christmas Tree.  
How to Treat a Frightened Horse.  
How to Sew on a Button.  
An Anecdote About Washington.  
When My Ship Comes In.  
Our Silly Puppy.  
Why Cats Make Better Pets Than Dogs.  
Is Country or City Life More Enjoyable?  
Why Lawrence Was so Named.  
Being Housekeeper for a Day.

#### IV. Technicalities.

Quotation marks are here introduced for the first time. Do not try to teach the so-called "broken quotation". Emphasize the idea that *every word spoken* by the person that is quoted, and *not one word more nor less*, must be enclosed in quotation marks. *If every word spoken* can be enclosed by *one* set of quotation marks, then only one set is required. But if every word spoken cannot be brought inside of *one* set of quotation marks, without also taking in words *that were not spoken* by the person quoted, then two sets must be used, or as many as are necessary. Drill on quotation marks must not be overdone. The school in the past has wasted many hours upon them, with no results. Tests have proved that with all the teaching of them, eighth grade children use them very imperfectly in their free writing. As a matter of fact, quotation marks do not enter enough into the kind of writing that the average boy and girl do after they leave school to make it pay to spend very much time in drill upon them. The same is true of the comma in a series and the comma after the name of a person addressed, two other points upon which we foolishly spent our time in former days.

- (1) Capitals. Use in abbreviations listed below, and in first word of quotation.
- (2) Punctuation marks necessary in letter forms.
- (3) Abbreviations. Gov., Hon., Pres., Rev., and others in general use.
- (4) Quotation marks in simple quotations.
- (5) Review all technicalities listed under earlier grades.

#### V. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

The pupils should be tested from month to month on all the words in these special lists, from the second grade up. From these tests, lists should be made of the words misspelled by any considerable number of the class, and vigorous drill given upon these words until subsequent tests prove they have been mastered. Nothing short of perfect scores should satisfy the teacher. It has been proved that not one eighth grade child in

a thousand misspells more than one hundred words of his ordinary writing vocabulary. It is believed that if all the words contained in this course of study are thoroughly mastered, the spelling problem, so far as the pupil's normal writing vocabulary is concerned, will be satisfactorily solved.

(Review words are printed in italics.)

*already*  
*all right*  
*beginning*  
*believe*  
*bicycle*  
*business*  
*coming*  
*different*  
*enough*  
*except*

*friend*  
*having*  
*heard*  
*minute*  
*oblige*  
*pleasing*  
*quite*  
*really*  
*receive*  
*replied*

*studying*  
*their*  
*there*  
*too*  
*truly*  
*using*  
*woolen*  
*writing*

absence  
 allowed  
 attacked  
 certainly  
 clothing

describe  
 hurried  
 library  
 occurred  
 seized

separate  
 several  
 speech  
 surprised

## VI. Written Standards.

All the studies that have been so far undertaken with a view to establishing a scale for the measurement of composition have shown that there is a startling diversity in the judgment of teachers as to the excellence of compositions submitted by pupils. The belief that this wide variation of judgment as to the intrinsic merit of the same composition is due, in no small degree, to the lack of anything like definite standards by which the language work of pupils may be measured has led to the formulation of the written standards set up in this course of study. That there will be complete agreement as to the suitability of these selections as standards is not to be expected. But until further study and experimentation will have evolved a better set of standards it is hoped that they will help to interpret to teachers in concrete form the requirements of written language.

The composition that follows was written by a pupil of our school system. It is intended to represent the language power which it is believed the average sixth grade pupil who has been trained along the lines suggested in this course of study ought to possess. While it does not possess anything that savors of literary style it has the merit of being definite and brief, with an orderly arrangement of ideas, and with sentences grammatically complete. As has been stated previously, teachers will find sixth grade pupils who seem to have inherited a natural language power, for whom this standard will be low. If, however, the majority of pupils who have completed the sixth year can write a composition as good as the "standard", there will be no cause for worry.

#### Something Good to Eat.

I belong to a cooking class that meets every Saturday afternoon. Last week we learned to make something new. We took a box of Unedas and some marshmallows. On top of each cracker we placed a marshmallow, and put them in a pan in a hot oven. They stayed there long enough for the marshmallows to puff up and brown. They are very good to eat with ice cream. The next time you come to spend the afternoon with me, I will prove it to you.

### VII. Comments and Cautions.

Strive to avoid making composition work disliked. In all correction try to stimulate the pupil to improve his written language because of the value to himself, and teach him to appreciate correction as an aid in securing that desired end. Do not dwell on correction, either in oral or written work, so much as to restrain the child's flow of thought. He should be stimulated to do careful work, but should be left to express his thought unchecked.

There are two lines of correction and criticism to be observed continually: *known errors*, those upon which there has been previous class drill; *unknown errors*, those which the pupil does not recognize as mistakes or weaknesses. Pupils should be held to *self-correction* of the former (those errors

upon which they have been well drilled) ; but matters pertaining to the bettering of their sentences, their choice of words, their arrangement of ideas are matters for the teacher to discuss in class. She cannot do this if all her time is spent in correcting mechanical errors.

See that your children get the habit of going over their work carefully, before handing it in, and making any changes they think will improve it. Pupils should feel free at such times to draw a line through a word and substitute a better one, or make any other changes that they think are for the better. The wise teacher is not distressed by changes of this sort made upon the paper. By degrees, the pupils who make them will learn to *anticipate* errors, and choose in advance the better word or the better form of sentence. We are not looking for *perfect* papers ; we are looking to develop the power that will later on make them *less imperfect*. This does not mean that neatness is not to be encouraged and commended, or that sloppy work is not to be condemned. It means that we must be big enough not to fret over little things, so long as the children are clearly on their way to better writing. And every child is on his way to better writing who is getting the habit of scrutinizing his composition, and correcting and improving his work before the paper is carried up to the teacher.



## SEVENTH GRADE.

### ORAL.

*(One-half of the language time in the seventh grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

A seventh grade pupil at the end of the year ought to be able, when called upon, to stand on both feet, away from the desk, and talk for two or three minutes upon a subject familiar to him in simple, clear, and grammatical English, with clear enunciation and a natural pitch of voice.

The oral exercises should be planned and carried out as carefully as the written exercises. Discuss the things that help to make a speaker interesting, such as a correct standing position, a pleasant quality of voice, clear enunciation, and a rate of utterance not too fast to be hard to follow and slow enough to insure clean-cut articulation; eyes upon the school-room audience, not upon the floor or the ceiling; the manner of one interested in what he is saying and in the effect he desires to produce, instead of one performing a perfunctory or unwilling task which he wants to have done with as soon as possible.

In this grade the oral composition may well call for more sustained effort. The pupil should begin to learn how to express opinions (original or gathered from his reading) of persons, measures, events, books, historical and literary characters. In this grade it is well to give out topics several days in advance, so that real preparation can be made with a view to oral presentation.

Teachers cannot be too often reminded that oral work is a great deal more important than the written work, although in this grade an equal amount of the language time is devoted to each. Children who leave school from the seventh grade will probably have little occasion to write anything; but they

will talk every day of their lives, and their success in life will depend much more upon their ability to talk than upon their ability to write. Besides, children who are to be taught to write well must first be taught to talk well. There is scarcely a point in written composition that cannot be developed as effectively, and much more economically, in the oral exercise; viz., arrangement of ideas, correctness and variety of sentence structure, choice and variety of words. Then, too, the moral value of the training is great. When a boy's slouching, nerveless posture against his desk and his slovenly enunciation of disjointed half-sentences have been exchanged for a body held erect, a voice and an enunciation that carry thought clearly stated, you have a boy who has gained in character as well as in ability to talk correctly upon his feet.

Continue to emphasize the importance of good enunciation, not only in the oral language period, but in all recitations. The reading period ought to contribute more to this end than it usually does. The fact that every individual in the school-room audience (including the teacher) holds a printed copy of what the pupil is reading aloud is not calculated to provide a very strong motive for clean cut utterance. The listeners know what the pupil is reading, even if neither his voice nor his articulation is good. There is a growing suspicion that the oral reading period in the grammar grades is very wasteful of time as a means of teaching children to read, because the reading ability that will function most practically in the lives of children after their school days are over is not the ability to read aloud, but the ability to gather thought swiftly and accurately from the printed page—that is, the power to read silently. But so long as oral reading holds its large place in the daily program, it ought to be made as effective a means as possible to improve children's speech by training them in the right use of the voice, and by securing the best possible enunciation of the words they read. It is certain that the work in oral language, so far as clear utterance is concerned, would be greatly helped out by a greater emphasis upon these matters in the reading lesson.

## II. Examples of Oral Composition.

The oral paragraphs printed here are illustrative of the wider range which the topics should take in the seventh grade. No one of them relates to the pupil's own experience. They are, instead, taken from the interesting things that children of this age read in books, magazines, and newspapers. This does not mean that the pupil's personal experiences should not be drawn upon to furnish topics for his oral paragraphs. Subjects from interesting personal experiences should still be included, but not to the extent employed in the earlier grades. It was not thought necessary, however, to take up space here with examples of oral composition drawn from actual experience. They are sufficiently illustrated by the examples given under the oral work of the fifth and sixth grades.

Seventh grade teachers should study carefully the suggestion printed under those two grades with reference to the importance of training children to select a *single phase* of a subject and to make the most of it they can in a single paragraph, instead of spreading themselves out thin over a topic so large that they cannot talk upon it interestingly within the limits of a paragraph. This point was discussed at length in the preface to the course under the heading, "Subjects Should Be Personal, Definite, and Brief".

### Delft.

Delft is a quaint little town of Holland. It is noted for the making of china. The china is made from clay, which is afterward put into an oven and baked. Then it is taken out and decorated with pictures of windmills, canals, and dikes. It is then baked again. The pictures are really burned into the dish. Delft china is famous all over the world.

### The Windmills.

The windmills of Holland are very picturesque. They are colored red, green, blue, or yellow. It makes one dizzy to watch their great wings go around. They are used to grind corn, saw wood, and to grind stone into sand. Sad to say, the days of windmills are numbered. Steam is now taking their place in many parts of Holland.

## The Bazaars of Tunis.

If one should visit the fairs at Tunis, it would make him think that he was reading the story of the "Arabian Nights". He would hear Arabic tongues speaking near him and see queer Oriental costumes on every side, with little booths loaded and draped with wonderful things. It is very hard for anyone to make a bargain in the East, for the dealer always begins charging three times as much as the fair price.

## Old Ironsides.

The United States warship Constitution had been victorious in many sea fights and had been fondly nicknamed Old Ironsides. But at last she was unseaworthy and was about to be broken up. A good many people did not like the idea of this. Oliver Wendell Holmes was one of these. He wrote a poem protesting against it and the poem stirred the hearts of the people so deeply that the government decided not to break her up. Oliver Wendell Holmes with his stirring poem saved the old ship.

## Dawes's Ride.

All American people know Longfellow's poem of "Paul Revere's Ride". From it Paul Revere has gained much fame for his historic ride through Lexington to spread the alarm that the British were coming. But few people are aware that while he was doing this, another patriot, named William Dawes, was making a similar ride through Roxbury. He was doing this under the direction of Joseph Warren, and his orders were about the same as the ones given to Revere. Dawes did his part well, but Revere got all the glory.

## Florence Nightingale.

During the great Crimean war, in which England took part, many wounded soldiers were left to die on the battle field and many died from disease. Florence Nightingale, a rich English girl, hearing these pitiful tales, determined to go and help these poor soldiers. She went to the front and took charge of the hospitals. Every night she went the rounds of the wards to see if all the soldiers were resting comfortably. All the soldiers loved her. Some of them called her "The Lady with the Lamp". The work of Florence Nightingale was the real beginning of the Red Cross work that we hear about so much today.

### III. Common Errors of Speech.

"If *to do* were as easy as *to know what 'twere good to do*", teachers would simply have to teach children the rules they violate in their everyday speech, and the errors would straight-way disappear. Unfortunately, correct speech is not acquired by a knowledge of rules. The rules of grammar do not fashion speech. They do not establish habits of correct usage; they only make that usage more intelligent. Therefore imitation, practice, and habit—not rules, formulas, and definitions—should be the watchwords of the teacher. It is constant use and practice under never failing watch and correction that make pupils talk well.

Two windows was broke.

Who done it?

We was to study history this period.

It don't matter.

He come to school with me.

They et the cakes.

The dog seen a squirrel.

I ain't doin' nothin'.

Who you going for?

Where's them two tickets?

Me and my brother wrote it.

We were to the show.

That book learns you how to take  
care of animals.

Shall I bring this book home?

I wouldn't be left do it.

Is every one in their place?

Those kind of flowers ain't pretty.

I didn't go no place.

My pen don't write good.

He had kind of a hard time.

Draw it like I said.

I'm all better now.

He wouldn't of gone.

Are they any pencils?

I'm doin' my work.

She uster live on Elm St.

Can't you see 'em?

Doncher see?

### IV. Comments and Cautions.

The teacher must be convinced that it is supremely worth while to equip a child with the power to express what he thinks in direct and clean-cut sentences, however simple, and that clear expression reacts on clear thinking.

Children talk the talk of the majority on the playground, on the streets, in their homes. The majority are careless of rules and ignorant of standards. With a fourth-grade vocabulary and fourth-grade habits of expression, a seventh- or eighth-grade child can make known most of his wants and most of his thoughts to his playmates and his family. The conversation that he hears passes on to him the worn coins of provincialism and bad English. For a few hours a day, five days out of seven, he is shut up in a different world, where the teacher, perhaps, as one pupil said, "always requests us to use good English". But what of it? Too often the only use for any English at all is for a few words in answer to rapid-fire questions, and nobody but the teacher has a chance to express herself. It is no wonder that children consider their habits of speech of little importance even in school, when the most continuous expression required of them is the answering of questions. If a teacher wishes to train children in right habits of expression she must create opportunities for such expression; she must learn to keep still and let the pupils talk. When the pupil does talk, the teacher should insist that he speak to the point and only to the point, answer the question and nothing but the question, and in the best words at his command.

## WRITTEN.

*(One-half of the language time of the seventh grade is given to written work.)*

### I. Aims.

In the sixth grade some attention was given to one or two of the more elementary principles of sentence structure, still keeping within the limits of the simple sentence. Variety in sentence beginnings was suggested, and the variety that results from changing occasionally the monotonous sequence of subject, verb, and object. In the seventh grade, if the teacher finds her class up to grade in the fundamentals of their written work, she should be encouraged to go a little farther into the study of *sentence betterment*. She should also devote a little attention



to the study of *choice of words*. These matters have been postponed until the seventh year, because the pupil does not earlier perceive the value of such things. Up to this time, we have aimed at copious and natural expression. Now we have arrived at the place where the pupil himself, if he has been led to become a willing producer of compositions expressing his own experiences and views of life, feels the need of learning how to say things better. This is the time, therefore, when children are not only willing, but eager, to study how they may contrive to say more effectively what they want to say. It is not to be expected, nor desired, that children in the grammar grades be taught many of the refinements of style. The business of the grammar school is to teach them to write correctly and clearly, and no teacher is to neglect the latter in her efforts to secure the effects that come from increased skill in handling sentences, or in the choice of words. It is better to know nothing of style than to sacrifice clearness and correctness in the process of getting it. The work here suggested should not be begun as class exercises until *the second half of the year*. By that time the teacher will know whether the children are ready for it, and, in addition, the pupils will by that time have gained from their grammar work enough familiarity with the grammatical structure of the sentence to enable them to begin the work of expanding, and otherwise improving, their sentences more understandingly. These matters should deal only with the simplest and most useful points of style.

The following ways of bettering the sentence are not thought to be beyond the capacity of seventh grade pupils:

- (1) Expanding the short simple sentence by amplifying the subject and predicate by (1) a word, (2) a phrase, (3) a clause.
- (2) Combining sets of short sentences that have unity of thought into a single sentence.
- (3) Contracting long sentences, by reducing a clause to a phrase, a phrase to a word.
- (4) Seeking *variety* in sentence beginnings, and through mixing long and short sentences in the paragraph.  
*Emphasis* sought through a change in form of sentence



(using the interrogative and exclamatory sentences for the sake of breaking up the monotony) and through a change in the order of words in the sentence, as suggested for sixth grade work.

The teacher should be on her guard not to overdo this conscious manipulation of sentences, so as to produce an artificial style. It is the common experience of teachers of composition that if this work of expanding sentences is gone into mechanically and in wholesale fashion, its results are likely to be disappointing. In the effort of the pupils to put into a single sentence what before they were accustomed to express in two or three sentences, there is likely to appear a new awkwardness that is very disconcerting to the teacher. Only the teacher's good language sense will carry her successfully through these first ventures toward conscious style.

The work of awakening in pupils *a sense of word values* is attended by no such danger, and becomes for children a most pleasurable study, if the teacher herself has a genuine feeling for words and is sensitive to their power of suggestion. It is not expected that grammar school children will become expert in the use of exact, appropriate, and expressive words. All that teachers should hope to do, or try to do, is to awaken in their pupils the beginnings of an appreciation of words, so that some of them, at least, will not be satisfied with the meagre stock of worn-out words with which many people are content to express themselves both in speech and writing. Dickens tells us of a young man in Doctor Blimber's school who was so badly taught that when he began to have whiskers he left off having brains. Most people stop learning words as soon as they have accumulated a vocabulary sufficient to communicate their commonest wants, and go through life on a fourth-grade vocabulary. The school, therefore, ought to do a little more than it has done to start the current of children's thought in the direction of a better choice of words in their speech and their writing. It is work that will not take much time. Occasional talks upon the value of expressive words, illustrated and reinforced by the reading of selections from writers who are acknowledged

masters of the art of diction, will do much to arouse a desire in the pupils to use a livelier verb here or a more expressive adjective there in their written paragraphs. Nothing is more valuable than the use of the "model", unless it be the teacher's own sensitiveness to words aptly used and phrases happily turned. If the teacher who reads to her class a paragraph illustrating the use of "words fitly chosen" does not make manifest her own keen appreciation and delight, the art of the "model" will not be likely to impress her pupils.

There are many text books that deal admirably with the subjects of sentence betterment and the choice of words. A few are mentioned here. Most of them are high-school text books, and their treatment of the matters is too advanced for grammar school pupils. They are put here for the use of teachers, who will find in them many suggestions which they can use to advantage with their own classes.

#### BETTERMENT OF THE SENTENCE.

- Hitchcock's "Practice Book in English Composition", pp. 119-136.  
 "The Mother Tongue", Book II, pp. 427-441.  
 Maxwell's "Writing in English", pp. 143-161.  
 Hanson's "English Composition", pp. 131-141.  
 Scott & Denney, "Elementary English Composition", pp. 80-100.  
 Huntington's "Elementary English Composition", pp. 100-152.  
 "Practice Work in English", (Knight) pp. 118-146.  
 Bailey and Manley, Book II, pp. 124-130.  
 Aldine Second Language Book, pp. 179, 180, 181, 195, 205.  
 Gerrish & Cunningham, "Practical English Composition", pp. 169-215.  
 Canby & Opdycke, "Elements of Composition", pp. 40-93.

#### CHOICE OF WORDS.

- "Mother Tongue", Book II, pp. 396-402; 435-436.  
 Maxwell's "Writing in English", pp. 187-205.  
 "First Book of Composition" (Briggs & McKenney), pp. 55-75;  
 183-193; 197-213.  
 Brooks's "English Composition", I, pp. 132-145.  
 Gerrish & Cunningham's "Practical English Composition", pp.  
 216-224.  
 Canby & Opdycke's "Elements of Composition", pp. 160-187.  
 Macdonald's "Foundation English", pp. 38-70.  
 Hanson's "English Composition", pp. 142-166.  
 Huntington's "Elementary English Composition", pp. 152-166.

## II. Lines of Work.

- (1) Sentences.
- (2) Paragraphs.
- (3) Friendly Letters.
- (4) Business Letters.
- (5) Testing mechanics and accuracy by occasional exercises in copying, dictation, and short reproduction.

(Seventh grade children should write from dictation at the rate of about 21 words a minute, according to the Courtis scale.)

## III. Topics for Original Paragraphs.

The topics here given are drawn mostly from experience. In keeping with what was said under the head of oral composition for this grade, the teacher may here enlarge the field to include topics chosen from the things that interest the pupils in their studies and in their outside reading. The teacher should read all that has been said in earlier grades with reference to training pupils in the art of "elaborating" simple themes in such way as to make them interesting. Especially should she study the two examples printed under the sixth grade oral work, illustrating the wrong way and the right way of handling a topic. The chapter in the foreword entitled "Subjects Should Be Personal, Definite, and Brief" will bear frequent re-reading.

It is not necessary that all pupils in a seventh grade class should write upon the same subject at the same time. There is no greater drudgery than trying to write upon an unfamiliar subject or an uninteresting one. No habit of good writing can be formed without a ground work of interest. Subjects should be *personal*. What subject that is worth writing about can be personal to forty individuals? The same subject for a whole class will, in most cases, require much oral development. Ideas must be drawn out of the class, or handed out to them ready made by the teacher. Only the children whom the subject touches personally can contribute anything worth while to the preliminary oral discussion, and only these will write about it with any heart. The other papers will be weak imitations.

My First Experience on Skates.  
A Boy Scout Hike.  
Celebrating Our Football Victory.  
A Dangerous Moment in the Auto.  
Bobbing for Apples on Hallowe'en.  
What the Audience Laughed at Most at Our Circus.  
How to Lay Out a Baseball Diamond.  
The First Base Man on the Baseball Team. (Each position to  
be made the subject of a paragraph.)

An Amusing Mishap in School.  
The ..... School House.  
How Our School Observed Peace Day.  
How I got My Newsboy's License.  
Does it Pay to Stay in School Until Graduation?  
Persuade a Boy Who is Unfair in the School Games to Give Others  
a Chance.  
Fifteen Minutes in Our Assembly Hall.  
My Hopes on Promotion Day.  
The Best Number on the Program of Our School Entertainment.  
When the Master Comes in for a Lesson.  
A Grand Army Man at Our School.  
My First Day in the ..... Grade.

What a Visitor to Lawrence Should See.  
Noon at the Mill Gate.  
The Soldiers' Monument on Memorial Day.  
On the Falls Bridge.  
At the Fire Station When an Alarm Rings.  
Essex Street on Saturday Afternoon.  
A Visit to the Reservoir.  
At the Corner Store.  
The Spring Freshet Seen from the Falls Bridge.  
The Most Attractive Window on Essex Street.  
The Busiest Corner of Essex Street.

When Our Engine Goes to a Fire.  
An Experience as a Newsboy.  
The Nine O'Clock Curfew Bells.  
How My Caterpillar Turned Into a Butterfly.  
The Ambulance Goes by.  
The Patrol Wagon Arrives.  
When the Organ Grinder Comes to Our Street.  
My Most Interesting Neighbor.  
The Store Windows at Christmas.  
A Good Citizen.  
A Neglected Tenement House.  
How a Cat Prepares to go to Sleep.

How I Earned My First Money.  
How to Behave in a Boat.  
How to Get Off a Car.  
Why I'd Rather Be a Boy.  
Why I am a Member of the Humane Society.  
Why Boys and Girls Should Learn to Swim.  
How My Bird Changes His Clothes.  
Why Girls are More Useful to Their Parents Than Boys.

#### IV. Technicalities.

Review the technicalities taught in the earlier grades, whenever the written work of your class indicates the need of review. Do not waste time in reviewing, just for the sake of reviewing. Take care that no time is spent on technicalities which are not required, and which have been purposely omitted from this course.

In the second half of the year, it may become necessary to give some attention to the use of the comma within the sentence. The restriction of the written sentence to the simple form in grades below the seventh, has made unnecessary any reference to this use of the comma before. Presumably the work of expanding the sentence, which is to be taken up in the second half of the seventh year (see "Written Aims") will result in the more general use of the longer sentence, which may be of such form as to require the use of commas to separate the members. Many pupils will use the comma naturally in this way. Indeed, most children punctuate their sentences without being told how to do it. They absorb the idea unconsciously from the punctuation of the matter they read in and out of school. There may be no need of your teaching this use of the comma at all. And unless the failure to use it is general, it would be best not to bother about it. If it is taught at all, it should be taught only in its very simplest uses. Children cannot make fine distinctions. The teacher who harps on the use of commas will find a great many of them in her pupils' papers, but a large proportion of them will be in the wrong place.

Spend no time on the comma in a series or on the comma in direct address. Spend very little time upon quotation marks, and make no reference to "broken" or "divided" quotations. See that the punctuation of the letter form is thoroughly known.

**V. Words for Special Spelling Drill.**

(Review words are printed in italics.)

<i>absence</i>	<i>describe</i>	<i>their</i>
<i>all ready</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>there</i>
<i>all right</i>	<i>laughed</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>already</i>	<i>library</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>attacked</i>	<i>loose</i>	<i>weather</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>minute</i>	<i>wholly</i>
<i>certainly</i>	<i>perhaps</i>	<i>written</i>
<i>changing</i>	<i>really</i>	
<i>choose</i>	<i>surprised</i>	
<i>anxious</i>	<i>disappeared</i>	<i>necessary</i>
<i>chief</i>	<i>finally</i>	<i>precede</i>
<i>copied</i>	<i>foreign</i>	<i>principal</i>
<i>cordially</i>	<i>government</i>	<i>probably</i>
<i>despair</i>	<i>grammar</i>	<i>respectfully</i>
<i>disagreeable</i>	<i>judgment</i>	<i>sincerely</i>

**VI. Written Standards.**

It will be noticed that the selections printed in this course as examples of oral and written composition are free from errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. This does not make them any less useful as standards than if the childish errors had been retained. It is not expected that children are going to write papers that are mechanically perfect from beginning to end. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the relatively simple requirements for written work laid down in this course of study make for conditions much more favorable for correct work upon the part of the pupils than was the case when the requirements were less definite. The restriction of the sentences below the seventh grade to the simple form, except in the case of pupils who have more than ordinary language power, will keep out of the compositions most of the loose and disjointed construction that characterizes children's unrestricted writing. The errors, therefore, will be chiefly those of spelling and grammar, and the omission of the capital and the closing mark. Children can always be counted upon to furnish their quota of such errors. They would not be children, if they did

not. Still, the ideal of both teacher and pupil should be a paragraph free from errors of this very sort, and for that reason the printed standards have been made free from them.

#### Christmas Windows.

The other day I watched two children gazing at the toys in a large store window. The little girl was greatly taken with a large doll that had golden hair and big blue eyes. Her tiny brother clapped his hands at the sight of a little white woolly bear, that held his arms out toward him. Each new toy they spied was greeted with cries of delight. After a while they moved farther up the street to gaze into other windows. As they went out of sight I thought how nice it would be to be rich. For then I could make many poor children happy on Christmas morning.

#### VII. Comments and Cautions.

The idea that criticism must be helpful, sympathetic, and constructive needs to be kept in mind. Webster defines criticism as "the art of judging with knowledge and propriety of the beauties and faults of a literary performance." Too often in school composition only the latter half of the definition, "judging of the faults," is considered criticism, with the result that the child becomes discouraged and indifferent to his writing. Especially is this true when the corrections are numerous. Some mistakes (except of form) should pass unnoticed with many pupils. What is the good of having pupils' papers corrected and recorrected until all errors disappear and little remains of the original except the handwriting? Such papers are not evidence of the children's ability to express themselves in good English, but rather of the teacher's ability to substitute her knowledge for the pupil's, perhaps without realizing that she is doing so. On the other hand, the teacher who can stimulate her pupils to greater efforts by her judicious appreciation of what they have already done will succeed in making them enthusiastic users of English. A sense of humor is what we need, not sarcasm.



## EIGHTH GRADE.

### ORAL.

*(One-half of the language time in the eighth grade is given to oral work.)*

#### I. Aims.

The aim in oral work for the eighth grade is, as was set forth in the foreword, to turn out pupils at the end of the year *able to stand before the class and talk for a few minutes upon a subject within the range of their knowledge or experience, speaking plainly, in clean-cut sentences, and without common grammatical mistakes.* The points emphasized in the seventh year (erect standing, clear enunciation, etc.), should be re-emphasized in the eighth grade. The oral composition topics should take a wider range, and much individual freedom of choice allowed. Some of the work at first, and most of it later in the year, should be assigned in advance, so that pupils may learn how to look up material, and study how to arrange and present it effectively. A few oral compositions presented with care, and criticised fully and deliberately by the teacher and the class, are better than many less carefully prepared and commented upon by the teacher in a hurried, superficial fashion. In the course of the criticism opportunity will be given for many pupils to talk, and all will learn from the discussion much that will improve their own talking. Care must be taken that these prepared oral compositions are not memorized. It is proper that pupils should fix in their minds the chief points of the matter they intend to talk about in class; but the practice of learning the matter of their oral compositions by heart should never be permitted. Teachers should be careful, also, that such prepared compositions are given in the pupils' own language. It is hardly possible for a teacher of experience not to know when a pupil tries to palm off as his own composition something that he has learned or copied from a book or a newspaper.

Debates furnish excellent opportunity for training in talking

clearly and to the point. The management by the pupils of the regular morning exercises, of special day exercises, and occasionally of the recitation, gives opportunity for the exercise of initiative and responsibility, and cultivates self-possession and self-poise. A teacher's success in accomplishing results in oral composition lies in her ability to arouse the interest of her pupils, in furnishing real motives and the most natural conditions for the work, in her skill in directing the choice of topics, and in her power to make the criticism encouraging, helpful, and constructive.

## II. Examples of Oral Compositions.

### Calendars.

There are very many kinds of calendars. In business offices there are large ones with big black figures. In the sitting room at home are artistic little affairs on different colors of cardboard. Sometimes we see upon them pictures of a historical subject, while others may be reproductions of pictures from the brush of famous artists. People who like to make these dainty little affairs are now engaged in making them to present to friends on Christmas. They will be as useful presents, as New Year's will soon be here. The children of the public schools make very pretty ones for their parents.

### "Bobs."

I have a little Boston terrier, Bobs, named after General Roberts, who died a little while ago. A white mark runs up the middle of his head, and ends with a white neck, which is followed by a smooth brindle. Two of his feet have brown stockings and white shoes, the others brown stockings and brown shoes. He has a little screw tail, the end of it being white, and an undershot jaw, with very irregular teeth. Sometimes I try to brush them with a doll's tooth brush. He knows many tricks that I have taught him, and on the whole he is a very smart dog.

### Gallows Hill.

One of the most interesting places in Salem is Gallows Hill. In the winter of 1691 a few girls of Salem by uttering strange cries made the people believe they were bewitched. When they were asked who bewitched them, at first they would not reply, but later named some innocent old women as the witches. The women were tried and put in jail. Soon many others, and even a small child of four, were found guilty. Some of the women were hanged on Gallows Hill. It is a very steep, rocky hill. The iron ends of the gallows frame may still be seen in the ledges on the summit.

### The Poultry Show.

For the last few days City Hall has been filled with hundreds of fancy poultry and pigeons, and the noise they made was anything but musical. The geese were gray and white, with large bills, and so tall that their heads touched the wires of the tops of their cages. There was a crowd always gathered about the chicken incubators. In one there were some tiny fluffy chicks just out of the shell, and in another they were running busily about. The pigeons were very pretty. A lovely one won a cup. The fan-tail pigeons strutted about in their cages like small peacocks. Another kind had gay plumes on their heads. Many of the cages had ribbon prizes hung about them.

### The Longfellow House in Portland.

In the city of Portland, Maine, on Congress Street, there is an interesting little house. It stands a short distance back from the main street. The people of Portland call it the Longfellow mansion, because the beloved poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, was born in it. It is a brick mansion, three stories high, with chimneys of the high, old-fashioned kind. There are certain days that are set apart for the privilege of letting strangers visit this home and examine its many treasures. I read many famous names in the register of visitors in the hall.

## III. Common Errors of Speech.

(Note: The teacher should read the chapter on "Common Errors of Speech" which is printed in an Appendix, and the comments made under this section in all the grades from the first to the seventh.)

There is enough pencils.  
I done my examples.  
You was right.  
Neither of the girls have it.  
It don't seem right.

We all seen the ball game.  
Two of the wheels come off.  
I ain't got none.

Who did this come from?  
He'll meet you and I.

I like them colors.  
I heard of you leaving.

I left my book to home.  
She is all better to-day.  
I have quite a few pears.  
I like these kind of examples.  
They wouldn't leave him play.  
They done it pretty good.  
Can I take my history home?  
That's different than I expected.

I've learned it to her.  
I don't know if I shall go.  
Do it like they do.  
Where are you at?  
Each may take their pencils.  
The lesson ain't in the book.

I must of been late.  
I reco'nized the story.

He makes 'em think!

#### IV. Comments and Cautions.

Should the pupils' answers to all questions be made in complete statements? That depends. While a subject is being developed by the teacher in logical order by questions, a full statement might hinder the quick grasp of a point on the part of the pupil, and might break the train of the teacher's questioning. At such times, full statements are not necessary and need not be insisted upon. The same is true in conversational exercises involving questions. Insistence upon complete statements at such times would be establishing a condition that is unnatural, unusual in life, and peculiar to the schoolroom. *In the recitation*, however, the answers should be given, almost always, in complete statements.

It will not do to pass by mistakes on the ground that the pupil cannot think and speak correctly at the same time. That is precisely what he must learn to do, and he must carefully practice it in every study.

Every recitation should strengthen the habit of connected thinking and correct speech, cast into complete sentences.

### WRITTEN.

*(One-half of the language time in the eighth grade is given to written work.)*

#### I. Aims.

This course of study has been built upon the conviction that the written language work in the grammar school should be confined to a few fundamental things, and that there should be constant opportunity for practice in these few fundamental things. In the preface the following standard was set up as the goal of grammar school teaching. It is believed that the

ability the standard calls for is the kind that will function most usefully in the life of the average grammar school graduate, and that the degree of ability it represents is one reasonably possible to be acquired by children of ordinary capacity during eight years of school. The standard was thus defined:

"The ability to write with fair facility an original paragraph upon a subject within the range of the pupil's experience or interests."

Such a paragraph should show:

1. An absolute mastery of "the sentence idea".
2. Freedom from glaring grammatical mistakes.
3. Correct spelling of all ordinary words.
4. Unfailing use of the commonest marks in punctuation.
5. Some evidence of attention to matters of sentence structure and to the choice of words.
6. Some degree of power to organize and arrange ideas around a central thought.

In developing this power to write, each grade has its share of the work to do. Each grade has its own standard of accomplishment set down for it in black and white. With the work each grade is called upon to do and with the standard of writing ability each grade is expected to reach, the eighth grade teacher should make herself thoroughly familiar. Before starting upon the new work assigned to her grade, she should ascertain what the new class knows about written composition when it comes to her and what language habits it possesses. Upon the basis of the knowledge thus discovered, she should then plan her work for the year with a view to round out and complete the training which the course of study as a whole contemplates. If deficiencies of a general character are revealed by these early tests of their writing ability, the teacher must face the task of removing them so far as she can. There is no other year left in which to do it. It is important, of course, that the ability of the new class should be tested on the basis of seventh grade standards, not of eighth grade standards. One of the reasons why teachers so often find fault at first with

the pupils who come up to them from a lower grade is because their judgment of the new comers in September is unconsciously colored by their memory of what the previous class was able to do in June. But if any large portion of the class is found deficient in the fundamentals of writing, these matters must be brought up to the standard before any of the advance work suggested for the grade is attempted. It is of no use to try to teach the rudiments of style to children who cannot write correct sentences.

The advance work for the grade, when the class is ready for it, should be a continuation of the work in *sentence betterment* and in the *choice of words* which was begun in the seventh grade. The sentence work should include transforming, combining, condensing and otherwise varying them, with the purpose of making children see how they can say what they have to say more pleasingly and more effectively. This work should not be overdone, however. The most that is sought through the work in sentence structure is to remove from the written paragraphs the monotony of the "primer sentence", which has been purposely cultivated in the grades below the seventh. A good many children naturally use the longer sentence, and to such children its use has not been denied in the lower grades. The short sentence has been exclusively required only from those who show themselves unable to use any other kind without getting into trouble. If, therefore, the eighth grade teacher finds most of the class using in their compositions a reasonable variety of sentence structure, she will be wise not to spend very much time on the sentence work. It is a matter that has to be left largely to the teacher's judgment.

The books mentioned under this topic in the seventh grade treat fully the subject of *sentence improvement*, and to these the eighth grade teacher is referred. Most of these books are not adapted for use with grammar school pupils; but the teacher will find much material in them which she can adapt to the needs and ability of her class. The prose literature that the children read offers an excellent field for the study of sentence structure. Lead them constantly to observe how good



writers manage their sentences. Similarly, passages selected from authors not read by the children may be reduced to short sentences by the teacher and given to the children to combine into longer ones. Afterwards let them compare their efforts with the passage as the author wrote it. Exercises in combining sentences which are made up by the teacher or taken at random from a text book generally leave the pupils uncertain of the success of their attempts, because of the lack of any positive authority as to what the best form of the combinations should be. The opportunity afforded to compare the pupils' efforts with the author's original adds greatly to the interest of the exercise, and the frequent act of comparing their work with that of writers of repute impresses upon them more deeply than any amount of talking can do, the difference between their crude work and the finished workmanship of the master writer. If pupils can be brought to appreciate understandingly the art of good writers and be led by reason of it to try to improve their own workmanship, the chief object of this work will have been gained. Always, however, the teacher must guard against the mistake of making children so conscious of their style that it will spoil their freedom of expression. There is danger, too, that too much work in combining and transforming sentences as a separate exercise will lead to an artificial style, or what is worse, a "wordy" style. Sentences are not improved by putting more words into them than are necessary, but children's well-intentioned efforts to round out their sentences often result in making them merely "wordy". A clause is no stronger than a phrase, nor a phrase than a word, unless something is distinctly gained by the employment of the longer expression. The monotonous "which" clause—one of the first products of exercises in combining short sentences—is likely to prove a nuisance unless the teacher knows how to head it off.

This work in sentence improvement should go hand in hand with the writing of original paragraphs, and should not sidetrack the latter for any considerable period during the year. The only way the teacher can be sure that the special exercises in sentence structure are doing her pupils any good is the evidence



of better sentences in the original paragraphs they write from day to day.

In the seventh grade a beginning was made to teach children to be more attentive to the *words* they use in their written paragraphs. This point should be made still more of in the eighth grade. The teacher should do all she can to teach them the value of *expressive words*. This work should not occupy any particular period during the year, but should run through all the teaching from the first. The books mentioned under this section in the seventh grade will give teachers excellent material and suggestions, although the treatment of the subject in most of these books is of a character more suitable to high school pupils. The literature read in class furnishes a constant supply of material, if the teacher will make good use of it. In addition, she should from time to time read to the children paragraphs illustrating the use of apt and expressive words. The books referred to contain many such paragraphs. An excellent exercise may be provided in this fashion: The teacher chooses a paragraph particularly strong in respect to the choice of words. This she "rewrites", substituting "weak" words for the author's effective ones. The paragraph in this shape is then written upon the board, or a copy of it given to each pupil. The pupils are then instructed to substitute for the "weak" words (which the teacher has indicated in her copy by underscoring) words which the children think are better ones. After they have done their best, they are then shown the author's original. The value of this exercise lies in the opportunity it gives the pupils to compare their best efforts with the work of the trained writer.

It is not expected that eighth grade children will become expert in the use of words in a single year. The chief thing to be sought through this kind of teaching is to train children to *give attention* to the words they read and the words they write, so that all of them will not be content all the time to put down the first word that comes into their minds.

Care should be taken that children are not led to believe that we want them to use "flowery" language. This is no

longer a merit in any writing, and is particularly bad form in children's writing. Naturalness, simplicity, and sincerity are the qualities of style to be encouraged, and the moment children begin to be "flowery", these qualities disappear from their writing. They have at their command only a few worn out phrases, like "the murmuring brook", "the moon's silvery light", "the white blanket of the snow", and similar stale and sentimental commonplaces. Besides, they lack that sure sense of appropriateness which saves the trained writer from offending against good taste by over-adornment of language. The two paragraphs which follow illustrate the effect of the conventional phrase and worn-out diction, just referred to, in contrast with that which comes from the use of fresh, natural, and vivid words. Each describes a day in Spring.

"Canoeing is an ideal sport for lovers of nature. A spring day is a day which the canoeist longs for. It enables him to drink in nature with all its splendors. The leaves of the trees are just beginning to sprout and convey an expression of joy to humanity. The birds are chirping cheerfully and welcome you with a beckon of the head, as you glide softly over the smooth waters. The stream flows on with the utmost vigor, and the sound of its ripple mingles with the songs of the birds. Everything is in harmony with nature. Even your canoe appears to be enjoying the scene, for it seems to require less strength than ever to propel it. But at last you draw a deep sigh of regret when the veil of darkness falls and puts an end to your enjoyment."

"There is one day when all things are tired, and the very smells, as they drift on the heavy air, are old and used. One cannot explain this, but it feels so. Then there is another day—to the eye nothing whatever has changed—when all the smells are new and delightful, and the whiskers of the jungle people quiver to their roots, and the winter hair comes away from their sides in long, draggled locks. Then, perhaps, a little rain falls, and the trees and the bushes and the bamboos and the mosses and the juicy-leaved plants wake with a noise of growing that you can almost hear, and under this noise runs, day and night, a deep hum. That is the noise of the Spring—a vibrating boom which is neither bees, nor falling water, nor the wind in the tree tops, but the purring of the warm, happy world."

It is not to be expected that children can be taught to write of a Spring day as Kipling can; but at least they can be prevented from writing in the fashion of the first paragraph.

## II. Lines of Work.

1. Words.
2. Sentences.
3. Paragraphs.
4. Letters, both friendly and business.
5. Testing Accuracy and Knowledge of Form by Copying, Dictation and the Short Reproduction.  
(According to the Courtis standard, eighth grade children should write from dictation at a rate of about 23 words a minute.)

## III. Topics for Original Paragraphs.

The topics listed here, like most of the topics printed under the earlier grades, are drawn from the material of children's experience. In this grade, however, the topics may be given a wider scope, so as to include subjects within the range of the pupils' reading, at home or in school, the idea being that eighth grade pupils should have opportunity to write about any subject in which they have a genuine interest, whether it be something which they themselves have experienced or about which they know only through their reading or study. Any subject is a good one which (1) they know well enough to discuss interestingly, (2) which they can handle within the limits of a single paragraph, and (3) which will permit the expression of their own thoughts in their own language. Pupils should for the most part choose their own subjects, and should always have two or three in mind, so that they may be well thought out before the time for writing comes. Barrett Wendell says, "Words and sentences are subjects of *revision*, compositions are subjects of *prevision*". Pupils should be trained to keep their eyes open, day after day, for good subjects to write about, even though at the time none is called for, and to develop the habit of "thinking over" the topic, to select the particular phase of it that can be best worked up, and to decide what details may be most effectively told.

Many of the topics printed under the preceding grades are quite as suitable for eighth grade pupils as they are for younger

children. The topics have been distributed among the grades with some reference to the interests, age, and maturity of the children in the different grades. But a little adaptation will make any of them usable in the eighth grade.

Sliding Down Essex Hill.  
 A Thrilling Moment at the Bonfire.  
 The Play That Won the Game.  
 What it Means to be a Boy Scout.  
 What it Means to be a Camp Fire Girl.  
 A Game That Trains Me to be Quick.  
 "A Man On Second and Two Gone."  
 How to Make a Raft.  
 A Mishap at the School Picnic.  
 A True Fish Story.  
 "Making Up" for the Hallowe'en Party.  
 Being a Baseball Fan at Riverside Park.  
 The Hero of the Baseball Team.

How to Behave When a Visitor Comes.  
 How to Behave When the Fire Drill Signal Rings.  
 Why I Like to go to the ..... School.  
 Why I Want to Stay in School After I am Fourteen.  
 Why I Want to Go to Work When I am Fourteen.  
 Why History (or any other study) is the Best School Study.  
 Why Geography is the Most Useful Study.  
 Convince Your Teacher That You Ought to Have an Extra Holiday.  
 Something Not on the Program.  
 Why ..... Won the Spelling Match.  
 My Idea of High School.

The New Boulevard.  
 Up the Merrimack With a Camera.  
 Glen Forest in Winter.  
 Salisbury Beach in Winter.  
 My Camp at Island Pond.  
 Den Rock in Winter.  
 Canal Street at Noon.  
 The Lights Along the Merrimack from the Falls Bridge.  
 The Oldest House in Lawrence.  
 How Traffic is Regulated on Essex Street.

A Package I Found.  
 The Fire Engine Horses.  
 How I Paid for a Broken Window.

When Mother Calls "Get up!"  
How I Lost My Belief in Santa Claus.  
My Paper Route.  
A Busy Corner.  
A Fleet of Ducks on the Spicket.  
The Balloon Man on Circus Day.  
How I Feel When I First Wear a New Suit to School.  
My First Night in a Tent.  
Waiting for the Postman on Christmas Morning.  
How I Made My Collection of Stamps.  
My Yard After a Snow Storm.  
Our Memorial Day Program.  
Sounds on a Cold Winter Morning.  
When the City Awakes.  
Our Garden Toad.  
What I Would Do with Five Dollars.  
How We Made a Fireless Cooker.  
How to Give "First Aid to the Injured".  
How to Make Out a Money Order.  
How to Set an Alarm Clock.  
Why Winter is Better for Fun Than Summer.  
Which Has the Better Time—a Girl or Boy?  
Why I Like "The Christmas Carol".  
The "Newsies" on Election Night

The Difficulties of Studying at Home.  
My First Rubber Boots.  
How it Feels to go Barefoot.  
My First Venture in the Surf.  
When I Got Seasick.  
Learning to Dive.  
Practicing My Piano Lesson.  
Seeking the First Mayflowers.  
When the Bluebirds Come.  
The Circus Kitchen.  
Driving the Tent Stakes.  
When the Elephants Go By.  
The Steam Organ.  
A Scene on Election Night.  
Card Day.  
Excitement at a Track Meet.  
The Drudgery of Washing Dishes.  
Spring Hats.  
Staying After School.  
The Spilled Dinner Pail.  
Collecting Voting Cards.  
An Icy Morning.  
How to Ring a Fire Alarm.  
When the Ash Man Comes.

Wash Day at Home.  
 Cleaning House Time.  
 Tricks I Have Taught Our Cat.  
 Safety First.  
 The World's Series on the Newspaper Bulletins.  
 Gas Bill Day.  
 The Car Sprinkler.  
 The Relay Race.

#### IV. Words for Special Spelling Drill.

(Review words are printed *in italics*.)

<i>almost</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>receive</i>
<i>anxious</i>	<i>government</i>	<i>respectfully</i>
<i>beginning</i>	<i>grammar</i>	<i>separate</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>heard</i>	<i>sincerely</i>
<i>business</i>	<i>judgment</i>	<i>their</i>
<i>changing</i>	<i>knew</i>	<i>there</i>
<i>chief</i>	<i>laughed</i>	<i>too</i>
<i>coming</i>	<i>minute</i>	<i>tried</i>
<i>different</i>	<i>necessary</i>	<i>truly</i>
<i>disappeared</i>	<i>oblige</i>	<i>using</i>
<i>disappoint</i>	<i>principal</i>	<i>written</i>
<i>foreign</i>	<i>really</i>	
accept	excitement	ninth
college	finally	occasion
disease	immediately	preferred
eighth	knowledge	proceed

#### V. Written Standards.

##### The Chimney Sweep.

A common sight in any large English city is a chimney-sweep. Amid the din of the noisy street may be heard his shrill voice calling "Sweep!, Sweep!" He is clad in overalls and loose jacket, and his face and hands are covered with soot and grime. He carries a ladder, and a brush so constructed as to be made larger or smaller as the size of the flue demands. The brush is attached to a long coil of rope by which it may be lowered into or raised from the chimney. He is not a very welcome visitor to the good house wife, for he brings dirt wherever he goes.

## Imitating Grandma.

A dear little girl sat in a big arm-chair out of all proportion to her size. The little curly head, peeping from a large bonnet looked like a little chicken breaking through an egg-shell. A large pair of spectacles adorned her flat little nose. She was making believe knit, as she had seen her grandma do so often. When I saw her she was all stooped over as if she were trying to pick up a lost stitch, and her two little fat hands worked clumsily at a big stocking. The little girl, bonnet, glasses, and stocking were a good imitation of grandma.

## Sunny Jim.

A short, fat little man was the landlord,—so fat that he seemed in danger of bursting his clothes. About his ears was a growth of curly hair, but his shiny head was as smooth as a billiard ball. His face was always wreathed in smiles. A pair of kindly blue eyes peered out under white feathery eyebrows. A squat nose occupied the middle of his face, looking as if it had been put on by some bill poster, as it was not exactly straight. Perhaps from constant smiling, the corners of his mouth were slightly turned up. He was the very soul of merriment and good humor.

## Benjamin Franklin.

This proverbial old gentleman, Benjamin Franklin by name, had a round, full, kindly face. His shoulders were slightly bent from hard work, but his carriage was stately nevertheless. He had a firm mouth and nose, not unlike those of Washington. He was bald in front, but had long flowing locks on the back of his wise old head. His twinkling eyes showed him to be a man of good humor. He wore the clothes of his period, and the day he walked down the street in Philadelphia one could not but think he was a wise old proverb escaped from "Poor Richard's Almanac".

## Excitement in My Neighborhood.

Last night pedestrians on Newbury Street had a very narrow escape from death. About seven o'clock the trolley wire fell to the street with a snap, a hiss, and a vivid flash of white light. At this moment a car appeared, and a motorman and a conductor stood guard over the wire until, with a clanging of bells and shouting of men, the emergency wagon appeared. To help out with the excitement a runaway horse charged straight for the wire, but strong hands stopped him in time.



## A Rural Village.

In the central part of Maine lies the little farming town of Etna, nestled among the hills. The town has its center at the meeting of two roads. Back of it flows a small brook which finds its way into a pond whose quiet waters can be seen behind a fringe of trees. Around the pond is a dense growth of pines, whose odor is strong upon the warm summer air. At the center of the town is the triangular village green, and, close by, the white steepled meeting house and the village school. It is a perfect type of the New England rural village.

## APPENDIX I.

Sounds Presenting Difficulty, and Some Exercises Designed to  
Improve Enunciation and Pronunciation.

(a) *Sounds Presenting Difficulty.*

1. The final *g* omitted in *ing*; *comin'* instead of *coming*.
2. Dropping final *t* or *d*; *tol'* instead of *told*; *an'* instead of *and*.
3. Introducing a letter or syllable wrongly, e. g., *umberella* instead of *umbrella*.
4. The two sounds of *th*, the aspirate and the voiced sound, as in *pith* and *then*, are confused. Thus *with* is made to rhyme with *pith*. *Th* becomes *t* as in *t'row* for *throw*.
5. The letter *r* is often added when none ought to be heard, as "I saw-*r* a ship".
6. Careful attention should be given to the proper pronunciation of the vowel *u* as in *Tuesday*, *duty*.
7. *th* is often pronounced as *d* or *t*—as found in *dem* for *them* or *tree* for *three*.

(b) *Some Difficulties Met by Foreign Children.*

The foreign-born child has special difficulties in pronunciation. The following are the most common:

1. Mispronunciation of *ng*, final and medial. Final *ng* (as in "sing" or any present participial) is frequently pronounced as *nk*. Medial *ng* is frequently mispronounced; e. g., "singing" is pronounced "sing-ing". "Finger" is sometimes mispronounced as "fing-er", "single" as "sing-le", "linger" as "ling-er", "hanger" as "hang-ger", "anger" as "ang-er", "bringer" as "bring-ger", etc., and "len'th" and "stren'th" are heard for "length" and "strength".
2. *s* and *sh* are apt to be improperly vocalized, becoming *z* and *zh*; as "acid" becomes "azid", "creases" becomes "creazes", "assure" becomes "azhure", etc. On the other hand, many say "wass" for "was", "whereass" for "whereas", etc.
3. The most common mispronunciation of vowels is the confounding of the sounds of *oi* and *er*; by which "oil" becomes "earl", "join" becomes "jern", "oyster" becomes "erster", etc.

(c) *Words Commonly Mispronounced.*

The following words illustrate some of the sounds that are troublesome, or which people are too lazy to bring out clearly. The teacher can add many words to the list.

arctic	elm	new
again	every	often
athlete	fellow	overalls
attacked	general	perhaps
asked	geography	pillow
been	govern	poem
business	government	poetry
catch	grocery	potato
cemetery	height	recognize
children	history	strength
chimney	hollow	studied
deaf	hundred	sword
delivery	jaw	though
depths	jewelry	thought
different	kept	through
discovery	law	tomorrow
drawing	length	usually
drowned	library	yellow
eleven	machinery	

(d) *Suggested Drills.*

Drill on words and phrases like the following can be made very helpful:

1. Sleep, sleek, sleet, sleeve.
2. Twelfth, breadth, length, depth, strength, width.
3. Particularly, especially, certainly.
4. Just, worst, crust, finest, youngest, greatest, breakfast.
5. Kindness, goodness, helpless, thoughtless, careless.
6. Give me, let me, was he, I don't know, don't you, at all.
7. Whittle, whistle, wheel, white, when, whether, which.
8. Would you, could you, did you, can you, had you.
9. This one, that one, which one, let her go, let him do it.

(e) *In General.*

1. Give drill lessons to correct faults of enunciation, until the pupils form the habit of avoiding the faults in ordinary speech.
2. Show the proper position and use of the necessary organs of speech involved in the production of the correct sound.
3. Pronounce slowly, enunciate clearly and distinctly. With foreign children sound is of greater importance than the form in the beginning.

4. Give special attention to ear-training.
5. Train the pupils to listen carefully to the teacher, to *watch* her speak, and to *imitate* her.
6. Insist all the time upon careful enunciation, exact enunciation—no “*xinders*”, no “*wan tcrs*”, or “*saw 'im*”, no “*yeh's*” or “*ycp's*” for “*yes*”.

## APPENDIX II.

### Selected Language Games, with an Analysis of the Common Errors in the Speech of Children.

#### An Analysis of The Common Errors in Children's Speech.

An inventory of the prevailing errors in the speech of children is a necessary preliminary to any rational attempt to improve the speech of children. Such an investigation was recently made in a school system comprising 3500 pupils. The teachers were requested to note the language errors of their pupils, and to classify them as verb-errors, double negatives, mispronunciations that could be consistently classed as language errors, misuse of pronouns, adverbial errors, and colloquialisms.

The total number of mistakes observed, classified, and expressed in percents are given here:

	First Grade	Eighth Grade	All Grades
1. Verb-errors .....	49.5	36.6	40.1
2. Double Negatives .....	3.6	2.9	3.4
3. Mispronunciation .....	16.8	17.3	20.4
4. Misuse of Pronouns .....	18.8	18.3	17.2
5. Adverbial Errors .....	5.3	6.9	5.8
6. Colloquialisms .....	8.2	13.3	12.9

It will be seen from the above that:

(1) The range of errors is small. The poor English heard is due to frequent repetition of a few errors.

(2) The percentage of each class of error is relatively constant for all grades.

(3) This is evidence that persistent and organized effort was not made to eliminate the errors. The task, before it was analyzed, seemed so complex and hopeless, that teachers' efforts were scattered and futile.

(4) The verb errors form a very large percentage of the total errors in each grade.

(5) Of the verb forms, almost one half (see analysis below) are due to confusing the past tense and perfect participle. A dozen verbs form the bulk of the errors.

A further analysis of the verb-errors brought out the following facts:

(a) Confusing past tense and perfect participles occasioned nearly 50% of the verb-errors.

(b) Mistakes in past tense and perfect participle of "see", "come", "do", and "go" represented *one-tenth of all the errors scored*.

(c) Nine other verbs caused *6½% of all the errors*.

(d) If children could be taught to use correctly the past tense and perfect participle of thirteen verbs, *one-sixth of all the errors made by these children* could be eliminated.

An analysis of the common errors in the speech of the Lawrence school children would probably result in figures very similar to those that have been quoted. That is, about half the errors would be found to be those of verb forms, and a half of this half the result of misusing the forms of the past tense and the past participle. The preponderance of verb-errors is readily explained by the much more frequent use of the verb than of the other words open to misuse—like the pronoun and the adverb. The proportion of errors in the other items of the analysis would in all probability be found to approximate very closely to that revealed by the investigation here described. Human nature is much the same everywhere, and it has no more common expression than the manner in which it abuses the English language.

#### Formal Language Games.

One of the most successful means of correcting bad language forms in the primary grades and establishing right habits of speech, is the formal language game. In these the

child is unconscious of the ultimate aim of the teacher, though fully aware of the fact that a certain form must be used in order that the game be won. The teacher, however, is more successful with results than if she were to explain her intentions. She secures the functioning of language at the very time it is needed. The drill is not something wholly apart. It is interesting, because of the activity. Repetition is called forth by a natural situation, and the desired expression is in the focus of the child's attention.

A few games that have proved very successful in the classroom are given as illustrations of the idea. The resourceful teacher will invent as many more as she will need.

#### Drill 1.

##### *Throw, Threw—Catch, Caught.*

Have two lines of pupils standing opposite each other.  
Consider children in their seats as spectators.  
One child throws the ball to the opposite, and says:

"I throw the ball." (or) "I am throwing the ball."

The other child says:

"I catch the ball." (or) "I am catching the ball."

Ask child in seat: "What did he do?"

"He threw the ball."

"He caught the ball."

"He dropped the ball."

} Spectators tell this.

The teacher throws the ball, and asks:

"What am I doing?"

"What did I do?"

#### Drill 2.

##### *"It Isn't."*

Leader. "I've thought of a word that rhymes with door."

Jimmie. "Is it part of any apple?"

Leader. "No, it isn't 'core'."

Ethel. "Is it what I did to my dress?"

Leader. "No, it isn't 'tore'."

Jean. "Is it what lions do?"

Leader. "Yes, it is 'roar'."

Now Jean, the successful, "thinks of a word" and the guessing continues by definitions.



This game never fails to give pleasure. Ideas struggle for expression in comprehensible definitions and the rhythmic formula. "No, it isn't....." repeated again and again makes the correct verb form pleasantly familiar.

## Drill 3.

Drill on Use of "*Saw*".

Place a number of objects on teacher's desk.

Have a row of children pass the desk, and tell what they saw.

Limit them to the number of objects they must tell, by saying:

"You may tell two objects."

"You may tell three objects."

The next child may tell four objects.

Look out for careful placing of "and".

"I saw a cap." (Not "sorra cap.")

"I saw a cap *and* a book."

"I saw a book, a marble, a top *and* a ball."

In like manner:

*take—took*

*find—found*

*bring to me—brought*

## Drill 4.

*Polite Use of "I".*

Teacher. "Mary and Alice may walk across the room."

Teacher. "Mary, tell me what you and Alice did."

Mary. "Me and Alice walked across the room."

Alice. "I and Mary walked across the room."

Teacher. "The polite way is to name Mary first."

Alice. "Mary and I walked across the room."

Teacher. "Alice told me very nicely. Mary, you tell me."

Other corrections may be taken up in this way.

## Drill 5.

*It is I. It is He. It is She.*

A child stands in the corner blindfolded. Another pupil stands beside him not blindfolded. A third child steps up and taps the first one on the back. Number one says, "Who is it?" The child who did the tapping says, "It is I". The blindfolded pupil then gives the name of the child he thinks it is. If he guesses correctly, the pupil not blindfolded says, "It is he", or "It is she". If not, he says, "It is not she", or "It is not he". "It is not Miss....."

## Drill 6.

Drill on: "*I seen it*"; "*he done it*"; "*me and him*"; "*I got it off him*"; etc.

Hold up a book or pencil. Ask these questions of different pupils: "What do you see?" "What did he see?" "What has he seen?" "What have they seen?" "What did they see?" "The answers to these questions and many more of the same type will call for the correct use of see, saw, seen.

"What did John and you see?" "What did he and you see?" These questions call for answers with the correct use of "he and I".

"Mary, get a ruler from Annie." "From whom did you get the ruler?" "From whom did Mary get the ruler?" This may be continued calling on different children and making use of different objects. "Where did you get it?" "Where did I, he, she, we, they get it?" The answers to questions of this sort will teach the children to use *from* instead of *off*.

## Drill 7.

Drill on "*I haven't any*," or "*I have no*."

"You may tell me about some things which you haven't."

"If you haven't a book, how would you tell me?"

"I haven't any book."

"Tell it another way."

"I have no book."

"I haven't any ink."

"I haven't any pen."

"I haven't a paper."

"I haven't a crayola."

"I have no ink."

"I have no pen."

"I have no paper."

"I have no crayola."

## Drill 8.

*Correct verb forms.*

"John, go to the closet, get a ruler, and put it on Mary's desk."

"Tell me what you did."

"I *went* to the closet, *got* a ruler, and *put* it on Mary's desk."

"Mary, go to my desk, get two pencils, an eraser, and a key, and give them to Miss ....."

"Tell me what you did."

"I went to your desk, got two pencils, an eraser, and a key, and gave them to Miss ....."

## Drill 9.

Drill on "*May I?*" for "*Can I?*"Drill on wrong use of "*Please.*"

- "Miss . . . . ., may I change my seat?"  
 "Miss . . . . ., may I go home at eleven o'clock?"  
 "Miss . . . . ., may I have another paper?"  
 "Miss . . . . ., may I have a book?"  
 "Miss . . . . ., may I leave the room?"  
 "Miss . . . . ., may I close the window?"

## Drill 10.

Use of "*Isn't?*".

Have a list of words on board. A child steps out of the room, while one of the class goes to the board and selects a word. Then the first child comes in, and points to the word he thinks the boy selected, and asks:

- "Is it 'every'?"  
 "No, it isn't 'every'."  
 "Yes, it is 'every'."

Make use of this game to fix the pronunciation of troublesome words and phrases in their minds, such as three, two, from, against, through, I had to, this afternoon, etc.

## Drill 11.

Game of Fortune Telling.—Correct use of "*saw*".

To play this game the class should be divided into fortune seekers and fortune tellers. On the teacher's desk should be many pieces of paper, each having a picture on the under side; the upper side should be blank.

Each fortune seeker in turn should go to the desk, take a paper, peep at the under side, and then, turning to a fortune teller, say what he saw. The fortune teller should at once tell the seeker's fortune. Thus: If a fortune seeker should say, "I saw a ship," the fortune teller should say, "You will be a sailor".

The following suggestions will help in the beginning, but the teacher and pupils should be able to think of other pictures and fortunes.

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| "I saw a club."        | "You will be a policeman." |
| "I saw a hat."         | "You will be a milliner."  |
| "I saw a ladder."      | "You will be a fireman."   |
| "I saw an automobile." | "You will be a chauffeur." |

## Drill 12.

## A Group of Similar Games.

Game 1. This game is like a spelling match. The teacher gives out the following words, one by one:

a bubble	a tulip	a riddle
a potato	a whistle	a wagon
a lesson	a picture	a kite
a bean bag	a ball	a flag
a horn	a leaf	an answer

The pupil whose turn it is, should reply instantly, choosing the most fitting answer from the following sentences. It is a failure to hesitate or to give the wrong answer:

I grew it.	I blew it.	I flew it.
I threw it.	I drew it.	I knew it.

Game 2. For another game, the teacher may give out the same words, and the pupil whose turn it is may respond instantly with one of the following questions:

“Have you ever known one?”  
 “Have you ever blown one?”  
 “Have you ever shown one?”  
 “Have you ever flown one?”  
 “Have you ever thrown one?”  
 “Have you ever grown one?”

Game 3. Make up a similar one for the class to play, using these words:

bought	caught
thought	taught
fought	brought

Game 4. A similar game may be made, using the following sentences, only there will be no rhyming words in it:

I saw it.	I ate it.	I said it.
I did it.	I lost it.	I showed it.
I chose it.	I took it.	I strung it.
I wrote it.	I gave it.	I spun it.
I broke it.	I sang it.	I hid it.
I tore it.	I shook it.	I bit it.
I wore it.	I swung it.	I wove it.
I stuck it.	I rang it.	
I drove it.	I dug it.	

## Drill 13.

Use of "*Doesn't*".

"Tell me some things your mother doesn't do; your father;  
your teacher; a squirrel; a robin."

"My mother doesn't talk English."

"My mother doesn't work in the mill."

"My mother doesn't start the fire."

"My mother doesn't chop wood."

"My mother doesn't like dirty boys."

## APPENDIX III.

## STANDARD LETTER FORMS.

These are the letter forms adopted for use in the Boston Public Schools in 1914, upon the recommendation of the Department of Educational Measurement.

## THE FRIENDLY LETTER.

316 Summit Street,  
Pomona, Cal.,  
September 2, 1913.

Dear Marion,

Mother and I reached home yesterday after our visit of three months in the East. Although we had a pleasant time with our relatives in Maine and Massachusetts, we are glad to be at home once more.

The peaches and plums are ripe now, and we spend all day on the ranch helping the men gather the crop. I wish that you could be here to help eat our peaches, but I suppose you are enjoying your good Massachusetts apples.

Give my love to your mother and write soon.

Your loving friend,  
Helen Garland.

## THE BUSINESS LETTER.

321 Beacon Street,  
Boston, Mass.,  
January 20, 1914.

Charles Lowell & Company,  
36 State Street,  
Boston, Mass.

Dear Sirs:

In reply to your advertisement in today's "Herald" for a clerk in your office, I wish to submit my application.

I am fourteen years of age and am a graduate of the Prospect School. My report card shows my standing in arithmetic and spelling. This letter is a specimen of my handwriting.

I refer to Mr. John L. Stevens, the principal of the Prospect School, and to Rev. George Chase, 25 Wilson Road, Boston.

Trusting that you will consider my application favorably, I am,

Respectfully yours,  
Richard H. Williams.



**Arrangement of Letter.**

The heading should be at least one inch from the top of the paper.

The heading and also the complimentary close should begin near the middle of the line.

Each line after the first in the heading and in the complimentary close should begin a little farther to the right than the preceding line.

There should be a margin of one-half inch on the left side of the note paper.

A paragraph margin should be twice the regular margin.

The complimentary close should begin with a capital and should be followed by a comma.

**Model Form for Addressing Envelope.**

Miss Marion L. Brown,  
14 Prospect Street,  
Reading, Mass.

Charles Lowell and Company,  
36 State Street,  
Boston, Mass.

**Directions for Envelope.**

1. Use ink in addressing letters or other mail matter.
2. Write plainly the name of the person addressed, street and number, post office and state.
3. Place your name and address in the upper left hand corner of the envelope or package.
4. The name of the person addressed should be written in about the middle of the envelope and with about as much space at the right as at the left, and each following line of the superscription should begin an even distance at the right of the preceding line.



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